

theatre
The Australia's magazine of the performing arts

May 1979 \$1.50

Theatre Australia

Hoopla's *Gentlemen Only*
Bastard director Rodney Fisher
Regional Theatre
Odd Angry Shot



**Helen
Morse**
in
RAIN



THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA

1979 WINTER SEASON
June 6 to October 30
Sydney Opera House

THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

(Pastiche in Italian)

June 6* 7* 12, 18 (Wed) 19* 22, 27*

LA TRAVIATA

(Verdi in Italian)

June 13, 16, 23 (Wed), 30*, October 4** 13 (Wed) 30*

Production previously sponsored by NSW Development Company

THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO

(Mozart in German)

June 20*, 23, 29* 30 (Mon) July 3, 7*, 14*, 18, 24 (Mon)*

IDOMENEO

(Mozart in Italian)

July 6*, 7, 13, 14 (Wed) 7*, 17, 20, 25, 29

Production purchased from Victoria State Opera

THE QUEEN OF SPACES

(Tchaikovsky in English)

July 18** 21* 24* 28 (Wed) 31* August 3** 4, 14*, 18 (Wed)*

FALSTAFF

(Verdi in English)

August 17*, 4, 7** 11 (Wed) 14, 17, 22*, 27*

Rehearsal 5 (Mon)*

Production previously sponsored by the New South Opera Foundation

JENUFA

(Dvorak in English)

August 19* 14, 21, 24, 29, September 1* 4

Production previously sponsored by the S S W Friends of The Australian Opera

SIMON BOCCANEGRA

(Verdi in Italian)

September 17*, 4, 7, 11, 14 (Wed), 18*, 22

Production previously sponsored by the S S W Friends of The Australian Opera

SALOME

(Richard Strauss in German)

September 17*, 18, 18*, 23 (Mon) 25*, 28, October 2*, 10*

Production previously sponsored by New South Wales P.O. Society

PATIENCE

(Gilbert & Sullivan in English)

September 24*, 27** 29, October 1** 3, 4*, 8 (Wed)*, 17*, 18*, 19*, 19* 26 (Mon)

ONE MAN SHOW

(44 photos filmed in English)

Presented by the State Opera of South Australia

October 10*, 13, 17

Evening performance at 7.30pm

Matinees at 1.30pm

* Adult seats available

** Empty seats available

Selected New Titles

David Young EUREKA

A 171C play for the middle school which tells the Industrial Revolution with the causes of the Italian uprising

Luís Novais VISIONS

(published July)

Peruquy in the 1860s during the bloody conflict in Latin American history. A story of bungled diplomacy, superstition and conflicting values which bring a nation to destruction



Walter Cooper COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

(published August) Sydney 100 years ago. A popular comedy of manners by the first colonial playwright to make his name abroad

Alexander Begg MARASSAS REEF

Lives at a talking point in this new romantic comedy

Ray Lawler THE GILL TRILOGY

The saga of the years that led to the Seventeenth Summer

Patrick White BIG TOYS

White's first play for 14 years. A Marxist power comedy

Samuel Locke-Elliott RUSTY SURFERS

(published October) Our famous comedy of vacation Australia now in a new Currency edition



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The national magazine of the performing arts

Theatre Australia



May 1979

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Nationalism and Internationalism

More than ever before, 1978 was a year in which Australian theatre nationalised and was embraced by theatre at an international level. As in all Festival years, the Adelaide Festival was, of course, a major source of overseas visitors coming into the country to give us a large range of pieces, the style and content of which were often radically different to our own ways. The Polish Minge Theatre was particularly popular, but the creation of Tadatoshi Kaneko with *Cygnus 2* left a far more lasting impression. Susan Bonnet brought out *East* and stayed to associate with an Australian cast, her adaptation of Ralfka's *Metemorphosis* at Marnie. As well as presenting their own works, the visitors were able to take in to some degree an amount of Australian theatre, give their own views on it and helping to disseminate knowledge of it through their impressions when they returned home. And last year was also the year when, among other things, London and San Francisco travel about Gordon Chater as *Breuer's President*, there was presented at the States and Ralfka's *Metemorphosis* delighted audiences with *The Award from the Bush* in the *Monstrum* *Renegade* theatre.

This year the degree to which we have some international involvement seems considerably diminished. Although *The Club* made Broadway for a few days, and Chater has also received personal accolades there himself, we seem to have lost some of the impetus of this mutual reception, the reports that have appeared in the press have been mainly concerned with the negative visitors. On the recent guide although invited to back at Melbourne to a here to reproduce last year's *Metemorphosis* and quite reasonably, to allow Victorian audiences a chance to see it and Stoppard's *Whitford* visit to WA, hardly enabled him to get a general picture of Australian theatrical activity. The Prospect Theatre Company's tour, which sounded as promising, was a disappointingly unbalanced series of slight revivals, which went out with a whimper rather than a bang. And it is a sad reflection that Jaggi's are able to do such excellent business with the very recent rate showing even by the "Theatricality Relief", which many of our own first top ballet companies are fighting for survival.

We seem, at present, unable to assess ourselves, and visitors, in the light of a worldwide theatrical context. This will not be helped by a recent casualty of the latest funding squeeze, the Australian Centre of the International Theatre Institute which is likely to

become defunct. The ICI is the only international agency which gives all nations with a theatrical tradition as we know it, through publications, seminars and the direct help it extends to any travelling theatrical personnel. The Australian Centre had been in existence for eight years when its grant from the Australia Council was ended nine weeks ago. During its lifetime it issued ICI cards, introductions and statements to many of the performers who travelled overseas in those years, and much hospitality was shown to visitors to Australia. Robert Quillen, the founding Chairman of the Australian ICI Centre goes into more detail about the work it carried out and also asks Australians about its use as international contact.

Director, Rodney Folmer, however, has recently stated that the international aspect is less than previously in Germany. At the end of January he was offered the post of Assistant Artistic Director of the German Opera in Munich but his appointment is now in doubt because the Artistic Director is already in Germany, and the company, unlike our own state organisations, lack self-reliance on accepting another outsider.

With perhaps an excessively nationalistic and the Playwrights' Conference has decided not to attend overseas to discuss past for 1978 and 1979 conferences. The reasons for this are quite understandable: in the past the Overseas Group has often become the star of the show and respect of international audiences. This has been thought to have been very much in the expense of our own talents and now Australian stars are being given a chance to show. The last international Conference, really one, was John Osborne, whose confidence in and enjoyment of the affair motivated strongly against others. But though he was the main public response it should also be remembered that Ross Wilson attended that same year and contributed a lot of constructive thought and help.

Although the Osborne type of publicity hardly does a great service to the reputation of Australian theatre, we are surely now in a position where we can accept and benefit from the views of an intelligent outsider and realise that we have just as much to offer them. To invite a foreign guest to the Conference contributes to international theatre and it is from a one-sided society.

The Playwrights' Conference is a truly national event but being so it also highlights a degree of parochialism within the country. It

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QUOTES-QUENIES



Helen Mirren in *Pearl*
Photo: Peter Holdstock

as I am writing the scenario and directing a batch of *The Chorus* to be choreographed by her. It is scheduled for spring 1990 and I will be going to Munich later in the year for that, whether the appointment holds or not."

BREAKING DOWN ISOLATION

MARY GAGE

"Fashion has always been the hardest part of being a writer — particularly in WA, and it doesn't sit a community art, an unperformed script is a dead script. You might as well be talking to yourself.

That's why to receive the 1988 anniversary playwrighting competition means so much to me. Quite apart from the money, which starts off a return to journalism (I was trained on *The Times*, London), it means that *The Price of Pearly* will be discussed at the Playhouse by Stephen Barry later in the year, talking as he can get the money he needs for a first one-act of his.

I hope it also means that my plays will begin to go on over East, the far only *The New Left* has made it to a venue at the Q Theatre, then still in Circular Quay, Sydney, in 1984. If that does begin to happen now, I will be glad to have done my training in isolation here, because — as it is that much harder to be nationally recognised — my plays will be that much better before they're exposed to an audience.

The Price of Pearly's Darwinian literary act in WA is the 1938, which begins and ends in the Japanese portrayed in Brownie. It weaves together different strands of the State's history — putting, lying, the advent of the motor car — in an exemplary line of art between a full cast Brownie beauty and Charlie Kingblood Smith — then a young teacher in Carnarvon with an impossible dream that one day he would be first man across the Pacific.

I found Smith a classic case of WA paranoia — serious he could do it, but stuck there as the War. He goes on the courage to go on trying myself, because he dreams which he realised, was crossing the vast Pacific ocean, whereas there is merely crossing the Nullarbor."

FOR THE KIDS

JUST GIDDY, Marian Stott, Herkes.

"When State Theatre came for kids — in fact we have an established audience now from the age of three. So, in recognition of International Children's Year we are doing three Folk Tales from China, Germany and Norway for our participating three to nine year old go from 7th to 12th May.

Peking opera students from our Duane School will perform *Yick Yick Numb* (the famous one who is rescued from drowning by his little brother), the familiar story of *Moscow and Givral* and *Three Billy Goats Gruff* outwitting the ugly troll.

These stories were chosen for their very different needs to encourage participation — clearly a topic and games.

Helen Mirren whose credits include *On the Move* for the Information Department, scripts for *Playhouse* and *Kinderergarten of the Air* and lecturing in drama and movement at the Marjorie School Teachers' College, adapted the script for staging. Principal of the Duane School Audrey Blackford is directing.

The Duane School, with over two hundred students records a young children's show annually always playing in the Government Recreation area in unadorned capacity audience."

TN CO NEW LOOK

BORRILLINGHURST, Twelfth Night Theatre Company.

"Twelfth Night Theatre Company has been actively engaged in re-thinking and re-defining its place in the performing arts of Australia. So many new ideas are already realised that a repeat appropriate to bring one of them to your attention.

Twelfth Night Theatre Company has been a pioneer in many fields and its traditions are proud ones. Of all the local amateur companies, it was the one which boldly took an early step into professional status. The vision of that decision has been given and it is still being felt, but, after a year of consolidation in 1988, we are ready for a renaissance.

Part of that new birth was a new look. Carefully preserving our official name and logo we are opening for a simpler, clearer, more contemporary style. By referring to ourselves as the TN COMPANY we hope to overcome the confusion in the public mind from the Twelfth Night Theatre Building Trust, and establish clearly our identity as a continuing entity."

THEATRE GOES WEST

JAN McDonnell, Artistic Director, West Community Theatre.

"WEST Community Theatre, now at Fullerton operates in Euclid and the Western Region of Melbourne, draws shows for specific audience and performs those shows in places where people are already meeting.

RAVE REVIEWS FOR GORDON

ALAN CARPENTER, Press Officer for Mural Theatre.

"Doctor Richard Whorrell and playwright Steve J. Speers were present when Gordon Chase gave his 50th performance at the New York opening night of the National production of *The Education of Benjamin Franklin* on Tuesday 28 March.

Gordon received rave reviews from the New York critics. Chris Rarnes from the New York Post wrote, it is some of the finest acting seen in New York this season.

Mid Gordon from the New York Times: The play is a vehicle custom suited to Mr Chase's expansive talents. — it would be difficult to imagine anyone else playing the part.

Douglas Watt of the New York Daily News, Chase's performance — lauded in Australia, London and San Francisco — is a remarkable debut."

NATIONALISTIC BIAS IN MUNICH

BODNEY FISHER

"My appointment as assistant Artistic Director to Lynne Seymour at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich was internationalised January 29th 1989.

In the interim there has been some opposition within the Company to the appointment of another non-German to the administrative central staff and as the contract I am making none too hopefully for a decade. However my collaboration with Lynne Seymour will continue.

"Our programme for 1979 is many and varied including classroom and out-door shows, a rock musical devoted with local high school students, *The Golden Fiddler* published show, a localised show for 'pet nights', a primary school programme and an end-of-year play.

"We're interested in creating original, entertaining theatre that comes out of and is of interest to the community. In this way not only new Australian material is developed but also a new audience for theatre is encouraged."

MAKING EXPERTS

JAMES MCKINNEY, Director of The Mill Theatre

"Every Thursday night is open house at The Mill for anyone in the community. We give people things to do and things to watch. So far we've been overwhelmed by the response.

Here's a typical response: 'The first week there's all these people doing things and you're not really sure what's going on. The second week you get the nerve to contribute something and suddenly find people don't put you down for it. By the third week you think you're a real expert'.

"We are a small professional group of five actors based on Deakin University's Mill Theatre, experimenting with ways to catalyse theatre activity in the Geelong area and trying to find what is the best form for a professional theatre presence in a city like this."

THEATRE OF IDENTITY

ROBERT FERRIER, Artistic Director, Murray River Performing Group

"In Albury/Wodonga, the MRPG's first show, *A Big Heart for the Lamb* is tapping into the very important tradition of Australian Tent Theatre. The central theme is identity: How do we preserve personalised live entertainment in the face of a deluge of amusement, which are technologically based? More importantly, how do we preserve the ability to discover who we are as a distinct environment which threatens success on the principle that all roads lead to London or to Australia to Sydney or Melbourne? Finally we believe it is done by creating a content, form and style which specifically relates to the community in which we live. For us this means extending beyond traditional theatre audiences and therefore dealing creatively with the suspicion which most Australians probably legitimately feel about the theatre. Secondly, it is achieved through direct involvement of the community in celebration of past and contemporary struggles of the region. We are having such a celebration. The MRPG's *Flying Fox Fly Circus* involving a hundred local kids in performance, with up to two hundred parents and teachers involved at production will be staged under the 'Circus On' flag top for nine performances over four days in May.

Language is an integral part of identity. Our high school show, being written from the feelings and thoughts expressed by a group of twenty unemployed kids who live in Albury/Wodonga, will demonstrate the depth of our knowledge while making a perceptive comment on a delicate contemporary issue. The approach is to emphasise the voice and movement expressions of these people, thereby revealing and underlining beauty and power of their speech. We believe that a basic problem for us as Australians, is to come to accept, indeed to love our own language.

"We have created many programmes which are innovative and exploratory. Suffice it to say that The Murray River Performing Group with the help of many friends, is off the ground and working hard and well."

RICH CHALLENGE IN THE NORTH

BOB KIMBER, Director of the Darwin Theatre Group

"It's a relief to be away from Adelaide and its theatre of colour combinations and to be faced with entirely different experiences. Here on the edge of the top end the natural environment is in one sense stark.

The human beings who live and perform here are led to their own mental and physical resources as they explore character and expand upon their ideas on the worlds created by the Darwin Theatre Group. That of course is as it should be for people concerned to create a theatre that is personal, meaningful and rewarding to all involved.

Darwin is a rapidly expanding community and the leading city in the most towards statehood of a country which was so first settlers in the 1850s. The city serves a vast hinterland wilderness, laden with all manner of flying birds and strange crawling beasts, heavy rain one minute, then scorching the next. The population is cosmopolitan in a way that can't be matched by any other Australian city, blending all creeds, cultures and occupations. The lively individuality of so many new men is readily apparent.

This is a town which demands theatre that is direct and spontaneous. The performers are central to the success of the venture. They must be pliant, authoritative in their skills, real in presentation and involved in the community where they live.

Here in Darwin the DTG play at Brown's Mac is a hip-sized squallor of a space with movable bleachers and heavy wooden beams at one's feet. It's a twentieth century treasure chest! When the lights go out anything is possible. The seats can rise and the stage can change, and always the performers in spirit are on the move as they confront their audiences and challenge their thoughts and feelings. The people involved — performers and audience — are close, and that is as it should be for a theatre relevant to

the community.

Theatre is a rare commodity in regional towns: more's the pity. One can be grateful that the roots exist here. It's vital that such qualities not be lost in future developments.

Negotiations are well under way to create a professional core of players to serve outcropping Darwin and to establish a regular touring circuit through the widely scattered towns, islands and settlements of the NT. The future holds mystery and challenge and the prospect of making some mighty fine theatre and some rich contacts. That promises to be exciting."

PREMIERE FOR ARMIDALE

ANNA GLOVER, New England's Travelling Playhouse

"The Chairman of New England's Travelling Playhouse, Professor Peter Eiken, announced this week that the company's first production for adult audiences would be Bob Herbert's award winning play *No Name No Pack Drill*. The premiere will be at The Arts Theatre, The University of New England, on Thursday 10th May and after a short season there it will tour the major centres of the region.

Opening nights should prove a traditionally glittering affair, as all major theatres companies and critics will be concerned to see the play — especially with the added interest of a newly formed company that already has the good wishes and support of the theatre world firmly behind it.

Certainly Bob Herbert winning the major award just when the company was searching for the right production guaranteed to explore the heart and loyalty of regional audiences is considered the best of good omen.

The excitement which Bob Herbert won was a compensation for Playwrights held in connection with Western Australia's recent 150th Anniversary celebrations.

No Name No Pack Drill has all the ingredients to produce a good story, interesting characters, and a fascinating trip back in time for those who experienced The Second World War.

Incidentally Bob is the uncle of Louis Nowra Australian playwright who has written *Amor Fugax* and *Phantom*."

MANAGING A DOZEN

CHRISTINE MILLER, Christine Miller Management & Promotions and Music Hall, Fremantle Bay

"In my eighteen years' association with the Music Hall (now Gaiety Theatre), I have always been struck by the seemingly appalling lack of good general managers in Australia. It seems that most people involved in the performing side of show business are aware of this glaring lack in the industry. Certainly there are plenty of good agents but by definition they cannot act

Continued on page 46

Ray Stanley's

WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS

Some of the film producers and other film industry people I've been speaking to recently, seem quite excited at the general return the Australian Film and Television School has mounted to give theatre directors training in film techniques. It is going to cost a lot of money, and will be spread over a fifteen months, but the long term results to Australian film could justify all this. Directors selected are Graeme Marshall, Rex Humphrey, Kerry Dryer, Arnie Koppie, Malcolm Robertson, Mick Rodden, Nigel Troffer, George Whaley and Richard Wherrett.

Following on Noel Ferrier's plans for the establishment of a national comedy theatre company with government funding, it is perhaps worth noting a touring company of *My Fair Lady* on England is being backed by the Arts Council there to the tune of 145,000. Can we expect Mary Hardy back on the stage? For once Mary is, seemingly, right-legged, but has been talking to John Sumner. Believe the Nimrod are going to revive *The Club* again — the time for a twelve month season at the St George Leagues Club.

Attendance at the recent "royal garden party" press reception held for the Melbourne season of *Crown Marston* re-introduced me to several people of the past. Ray Edward for instance, the first Australian actress I met on arrival in Australia, when she was playing in *Beloved of Angels' Affly*. Betty March who was Loren Plaster's girl friend before he went to England and Kevin Howard — Taking a break from acting, Barry Pearce tells me he is directing a series of documentary films for the Tasmanian Film Corporation. After starring in Colin Higgins's rampant movie *Algonquin* as the *Angels' Wife* in Melbourne, will Vincent Price and Carol Brown stay on and do some stage work?

Understand David Williamson wrote the leading role in *Jurassic North* with Frank Whelan in mind. Seems as if it is going to be Frank's year: he has a coin in the film *Breaker Morant* and also a lead in one of the *Lawson's Mates* TV series for the ABC, *Shedden and Smith*. Another who is an *Breaker* follow-up is Rod Milkins, following his role in the *Old Times*. Seems it is going to be Robby Lamb (and not John McEwen) who, together with Jacqueline East, will be in Peter Williams' production of

Picnic, the play which opens in Sydney June 22. It would not surprise me if a special edition of *The Paul Hogan Show* launches the new 3D system in Australia, and abroad in the world.

Since 1971 there have apparently been sixteen productions in New Zealand of New Zealanders from McMeel's play about Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry, *The Two Tigers*. In Australia presently it is at La Mairie from May 16 for three weeks. I understood the playwright is flying over to meet with the production, which is directed by Robert Clower with Sean Myatt, Kim Fookin, Anna Gifford and Adrien Wright making up the cast. — Robbie McGrover, who is adapting an aspect of the MIT's *Johnny's End* and before that the Williamson *Levee* is playing the lead in *John Breakers* one of the ABC's *Lawson's Mates* series.

Touring the Northern Territory for the Arts Council of Australia (New South Wales Division), Beverly Dunn gives around twenty performances of her one woman show *At the Age of* in the programme all researched by Beverly are twenty seven pieces with about forty different characters. In January she is touring Victoria with it. — Jack Thompson told me recently he would dearly like to get back to the stage (a few years since he quit, and that he knows he will eventually). It's really a question of fitting it in with his film commitments. When Jack does it is likely to be for Hayes Gordon (he had twelve months training at the Ensemble, and possibly with Carol Rye).

A very talented Nick Melchior told me he took for my article in the February issue on Crawford Productions, pointing out inaccuracies. Nigel Dick is now general manager, but is director, the group from the VFC for Young *Ramsey* was for the first series, not second, and Nick maintains he did send material and photographs to me, and apparently the PMG is in trouble in that area. At the time he promised to send me material and photographs for another project, but after a fortnight (despite two further telephone calls, that also did not reach me). — Elie Frimgrat's *Opera House* concert record has been overruled by Count Basie, also presented by the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. £16,000 dollars was taken at the box office £295 more than the ticket concert.

Michael Crawford returns to the London stage in June in the musical *Flowers for Algernon* directed by Peter Cox. It is based on the film *Charly* for which Cliff Robertson played an Oscar. And Leslie Bricusse has been working off to New York to write the book and lyrics for a musical movie of Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara* with Henry Mancini composing. Bricusse wants Julie Andrews, Patsy Kensit and John Wood (not Australia's!) for the three star parts. — Hazel Kennedy Tyson has got half a million advance from his New York publishers for his biography of Laurence Olivier.

It seems customary to blast off at government bodies, but for once I'd like to go on record and

thank the Australian Customs' Arts Information Department for the help it gave me in setting up a recent project, providing me with information notes and addresses and useful suggestions. Ray Evans, who recently directed *Brud' Raine* at La Mairie, is going to play an American prize in *The Island* a film directed by Peter Bowdler and shot in the West Indies, which will star Angela Punch.

There's been talk of another Australian EXPO next year, this time in America, with people like Jack Thompson, Terry Inchman and Pat Condon involved. There's been mention of Australian films, and the Australian Ballet — but so far we have not heard any whiffers of Australian drama. What about it Nimrod? Official law from the Producers and Directors Guild of Australia (Victoria) is that the association believes that "under present circumstances foreign directors should be permitted to direct film, television, theatre and radio productions in this country".

It should be "house full" notices everywhere for *Trochus Joyce* and Brian Murphy when they tour Australia late September in *George and Mildred*. With the Truist involved in present affairs I understood as well as capital cities, they will play in several, like Ballarat and Rockhampton. — The State Theatre Company of South Australia looks like having a busy time around June. Not only is the company's production of *A Month of Tenor* Wagner going to Sydney (performed as *Wotan* with the Thruist, but *Arise* and the *Man* will be seen in *Trochus and Summer of the Seventies* Golf a touring company's work.

All the Melbourne press reception of *Peter Williams' Bedouins* Force decorated John Denver yet again matters that he'll never act on the stage again, but of course if the right role should come up — I. — Peter Bowler saying he'd like to do a one man show and make a tourney tour throughout Australia. — Kerry Maguire still a little injured at the reception she's continuing to receive for her role in *Against the Wind* and Barry Cryer is writing another comedy, his first, *Fellow That Method* was presented in England by Ray Cooney. Wonder why it hasn't been sold up to Australia?

Quote of the month surely must come from Zai Zai Carter "I'm a great housekeeper. After my divorce I kept all the houses."

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Dear Sir,

I was delighted to read Noel Fenn's article on musicals in the March issue of *Theatre Australia*. It is a good pleasure to know that someone of his standing is prepared to speak out for what is really a fine (and popular) form of culture. Musicals are the culture of the people and have proved to be quite popular in Canberra which, apart from serious politicians who read, is quite a civilised city.

You may recall that both myself and the Canberra Philharmonia Society have written to you on this subject previously. The real state of play was revealed when you chose to quote us both. It is indeed a step forward to see that Noel has looked through our one line in *Theatre Australia*! I hope we can manage the other in official findings.

Canberra Philharmonia has been using our Noel's thoughts in recent times we have received *Amos 'n' Gus*, *Swash Bangle*, *White Horse* (with Brian Cresswell) *Fiddler on the Roof* (with Ronald Macgregor), *The Mikado* (with Thomas Belmonte) and *The Sound of Music*. All of these shows were exceeding successful. We are currently preparing *My Fair Lady* for presentation in August this year.

I, for one, would be keen to hear more from Noel on the subject of musical theatre and to see more in *Theatre Australia* on the subject. Sadly the theatre is a neglected form of culture when one considers the level of support given by way of government funding to the high cultural activities existing in this country.

Let's also hear from others interested in the musical and support Noel in getting the musical off the ground and on to the boards.

Yours faithfully,
Ian Gunning
Holder, ACT

Dear Sir,

May I raise two points in connection with Mr Noel Fenn's challenging call for an Australian Musical Theatre Company (*Theatre Australia*, March 1976).

First, the early Australian musical *Mr Fenn* mentions is *Collier 'n' Son* Collier's *Am*. The story, based on fact, revolves around an inn kept by one Patrick Collier — hence the placing of the apostrophe. Collier's *Am* had its first performance at the Savoy Theatre, Sydney, on 30th December, 1912. Ross Maxwell starred as Mary Collier, and the rest of the company were mainly Irish professionals. Collier's *Am* was later produced in a revised and expanded format by Francis 'N' Theng at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, on 22nd December, 1913. This presentation starred Gladys Moncrieff as Mary Collier, with George Wallace providing the comedy. It later

transferred to the Theatre Sydney.

Collier's *Am* was certainly not the first Australian musical comedy, though it seems that the first local musical to be professionally produced was the thoroughly tried *F.F.F.* Web book by Jack de Gars and music by Reginald Scamham. *F.F.F.* was first presented by Harry Kelland's Travelling Theatre Ltd at the Prince of Wales Theatre (now the Opera Theatre), Adelaide, on 11th August 1909. The company included Minnie Love, Hugh Stryker, Marie Le Vieux, Charles Wickham and Maggie Moore. It was subsequently played in Perth, then moved to Melbourne for a short week's season at the Ritz Theatre. Though a box office disaster (cost — a new play in Sydney — it did provide two hit songs "Murray Moon" and "Sleepy Sea", sheet music and gramophone records of which sold in thousands.

We are trying to locate copies of the script and scores of *F.F.F.* and Collier's *Am* and we would appreciate hearing from any *Theatre Australia* reader who can help us. We are also anxious to find copies of other early Australian musicals such as *The Collier Tree*, *Blue Mountains Melody* and *The Bittern Vigilant*.

Yours sincerely
Frank van Straten,
Adelaide,
Performing Arts Museum,
Melbourne.

Dear Sir,

After reading Mr Noel Fenn's article in "Spotlight" (March '76) I would like to congratulate him on his ideas and comments (second hand ones or not). They make a lot of sense.

The need for a certain mood in the pure sense of transporting the audience from the mundane everyday world to a happy world of fantasy, is great. Also to be mentioned, the musical is a gender introduction to the world of theatre — by many complicated steps, various doors can be followed later as the interest (hopefully) develops.

Mr Fenn's list of shows and possible start is super, and there must be many more people who've never seen a lot of these shows and just as many more who'd love to see them again.

Love reading *Theatre Australia* — keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Jo Edwards,
Karo, Vic

Dear Sir

I was thrilled to let you when I read that Mr Terry Nathan has designed a jumper for your third

anniversary celebration.

My joy was tempered, however, by the realisation that poor Melbourne critic Vye Richards would be placed in a perilous position.

While Terry Nathan is no doubt an excellent young man, he is nevertheless an entrepreneur engaged in the notorious fashion business and is thus profiting from the exploitation of women.

The radical Gordon Greenidge will have no part of such sexist and capitalist high jinks and will stage accordingly as a point of principle.

I wish Mr Richards well in his new venture in the West Indies.

Yours sincerely,
Alexander Bain,
Bend, East, NSW.

Dear Sir,

Poor Don's letter (TA, March, 1976) worries me more than a little. It is so typical that of an administrator. After a fusillade of impressive statistics he claims that alone make the Queensland Theatre Company (TTC) known, deserving of a pat on the back.

Impressive as the quantity may be, might we not lose sight of quality. If for one has very considerable respect for the quality of the theatre I am at almost both as a pupil and teacher.

Yours faithfully
W F Gyles
Perthville NSW

Dear Sir,

On my recent return from overseas I enjoyed discovering your journal (the February issue).

It impressed me as an increase in interest in cultural events in Australia, that is usual. I discovered Mr William Shakespeare's review of the Australian Ballet's production of *Swan Lake*.

In 1976, said his assessment, stands a little too technical, and my inclination to socialist realism, the Politburo, ghost of '68 revision and suppression of during cultural repression in Hungary by the Soviet Ministry of Culture only brings about Mr Shakespeare's credibility as an art critic.

I have recently spent six months in Hungary, and observed numerous productions of the state directed stage, film, TV and radio.

These performances included numerous savage criticisms of the social problems of the system for many decades than any I have seen in this country. I have seen "realism" in full-blown reality in an open scene on stage.

These experiences make me seriously wonder
Continued on page 19

The Inner Life of Helen Morse

Lucy Wagner

Helen Morse is one of the few Australian actors whose name in a film or play can be used as a shorthand to the public. And yet, she is almost obscenely shy of publicity, not merely avoiding a personality cult, but actively discouraging press and media interviews, interviews and any invasion of her privacy. She admits to being quite shy and "hesitant at certain situations", but her lack of desire for personal aggrandisement seems not to result in the work being a straining vessel as with a compelling performer inextricably and in almost exclusive focus on the dramatic value of situations, her work and other people.

Typically, after *Circle and Square* at Hanging Rock had brought her to a pinnacle of fame, she didn't capitulate on her terms, but chose not to work for the greater part of 1976 and '77. "I didn't think I was growing. I knew that if I wanted to work I could earn a fortune, but it wasn't the kind of work I wanted to do, it wasn't rewarding myself or making demands."

When her returned Helen Morse, as far as she will allow, to the public eye, in her role in the recently released international film *Agatha* in which she plays the woman who bedevils Agatha Christie (Frances Hodgson) during her strange disappearance. When talking about the film she borrows no pride in having been chosen, when another actress was unable to commit herself to the role, the director saw Morse and Circle "and said 'Ah, we might take a punt on Miss Morse', and that's simply what happened". Nor does there appear to be the slightest magnification of her relationship with the "stars" of her four small screen, with Diana Blighman, she thinks the only dialogue over has probably been one — she hasn't yet seen the film, perhaps because her involvement with it is now over.

For that Miss Morse has any significance is a rare system, but far has a star is simply someone who draws people to the cinema or theatre, with no further implications. She certainly doesn't worry when an Australian does not know of the happenings that go with the big name syndrome elsewhere and she doesn't feel undervalued. "I don't really dwell in these terms. I suppose I'm a bit neurotic-minded, I tend to put things in terms of my relationship to the part I'm playing and the people I'm working with, and the ideas of the play or film." So for her there is no real difference between working on an international film set, or on the tiny Ensemble Theatre in Sydney where



Helen Morse

she is currently playing *Sarah Thompson* in *Sirius* at Malthouse's *Ruby*. In fact she prefers to be working here, "the quality of work and the commitment from everybody involved is nothing to do with place or people."

If she has any criticisms of the quality of the work she did at NIDA, introducing in 1965 with Jim Sharman, Alan Thompson, Maria Harris and others it is that other acting techniques were glossed over. "Not enough time was spent on inner techniques, analysing a play, part or character. But then at drama school you can only learn certain disciplines that are valuable, the rest you pick up from experience." What Helen found most valuable about her time at NIDA was working on real theatre with the Old Tote — working backstage, front of house, understudying professional actors — so at was

not just an academic student approach. And perhaps the most useful aspect for her was watching the professionals at work, picking things up.

A rare month's country tour after the early Sharman production of *A Year of Henry* was "the best thing that would have happened" as far as gaining experience went. With an offshoot company of the Young Ensemble, Alexander Hay directed and acted versions of *Richard III* and *The Merchant of Venice*. "It was marvellous. We did one night, and sometimes one day, stands in NIDA country areas, seting up as a completely new venue every time. It was terrific experience and very stimulating. It really is like to have space in a good production."

Helen claims she finds it hard to settle down, although "I suppose that is my home base. I long-

Sydney — the physical environment, the sea, the harbour. I just love to go to Chchick Bay and sit there. I find it very refreshing, rejuvenating." A few years ago the thought of staying in England and finding work there had now, in spite of her well-known random, free-lance "it depends on the kind of work you're doing wherever it is. I'm not interested in going to America or England and doing jobs of those whatever they are. I'm interested in working with small groups of people" she worked in an extended situation for a year with the Tour in 1971, doing *As You Like It*, *Men of Men*, *Arms & The National Health* and *Comet* but instead of being invited to extend and "I was glad to put out. Back stage politics had started to take precedence over audience."

That was the second period Helen Morse had spent with the Tour, the first being in 1961, when the company was still in the MIDA, modern theatre. Then she played roles like *Lady Teedle in School for Scandal* and *Eliza in Pygmalion*. A role she found a real challenge to get on top of, as she did Susan in *Hamlet's Town* and Nina in *The Seagull*, both of which she played at MIDA.

But *Seagull*, she thinks, is the most challenging part she's ever had, because of her huge range from husky doctor to sweet little Christian. And being director of *Hamlet*, is a great help to her because he is full of ideas that Helen finds psychologically and theatrically valid, and easily related to the content of the play. Such translation is a rare experience — Ms Morse knows one or two directors whose notes she would turn through, if she were a good listener.

But as long as the moment on stage is true, any method she believes, is valid for achieving Helen's own approach is always by way of a strong first impression, a meeting and preliminary dialogue with directors and fellow actors — often passive! "Then I let the whole thing start to live in my head and I shift into a gear where throughout the day, whatever I'm doing, things will pop out and I start then into my play computer. A lot happens internally but I think consciously too build material for characters in my imagination."

For her, finding the inner life of a character is the essence of a true portrayal and the challenge is to have the human being stand working within as freely as he or she. "If the inside is right, the outside will come. A part of show might give you a certain way of walking but what interests me is what goes on in the head of the human being."

Helen Morse's motivation for being in actors seems to be that it is an ideal way to express the human she has for the most side of life. She moves easily between stage and film, enjoying the intimacy of the camera — "you just need to have a thought flash through your mind and it's printed" — and the theatre because "you are able to express ideas in a way that's often more heightened than in film." But all acting is for her "exploring people. I suppose I really love it. Sometimes it can be an obsession."

Does Australian Theatre want an international contact?

Robert Quentin*

At a meeting towards the end of 1971 the Australian Council's Theatre Board delivered receipt of an annual grant to the Australian ITI Centre in 1972 the first grant enabled the Centre to conduct a part-time office for the operation of its theatrical information exchange. At this year's March meeting the Theatre Board invited the Centre's revised application for a smaller grant.

What national and international services does the ITI provide for Australian Theatre?

"As well as standing as a considerable volume of correspondence."

"Locating overseas visitors with contacts in Australian theatre."

"Helping Australian theatre professionals in writing abroad with address lists and letters of introduction, and issuing them with individual identity cards."

"The Centre keeps files for historical reference by collecting programmes and press notices."

"Reports, archival data of productions of Australian plays in World Presses in all ITI Centres."

"has gradually built up a small but quite comprehensive theatre library."

"and for the past seven years has published a *Newsletter* which lists Australian plays in performance in all states and provides theatre information of interest to theatre professionals. Four hundred copies of the edition were sent out quarterly."

"The Centre also distributes the Paris quarterly bilingual review *International Theatre Information* to Australian theatres."

"has put forward two Australian requests for international distribution to all ITI Centres."

"and has published Australian theatre around the world by sending 100 copies of *Theatre Australia* to major ITI Centres around the world every few months."

"Voluntary ITI members representatives help in news gathering and publicity."

"From time to time the Centre has received Australian representations in particular."

The ITI holds biennial international congresses at which there is usually some Australian participation by one or two delegates. Twice the Centre has proposed to host such a congress in this country which would serve as a valuable focus for Australian theatre as well as giving its friends around the globe and stimulating future contacts. For financial reasons it has been impossible to carry this idea through to performance.

During a tour of China the Honorary Secretary made contact with officers of the

China Dramatic Association, the official theatre body of the Ministry of Culture, encouraging them to join the ITI by establishing a Chinese Centre, and arranging that they receive the necessary documents and an invitation from the Executive Committee through the Secretariat in Paris. Chinese participation in ITI activities would increase Asian theatrical collaboration to desirable levels. Australia's new neighbours in the part of the world.

Is the money needed to plug theatre into world theatre circuit squandered?

We welcome new ideas and invite you to write and advise us how to fulfill our role within UNESCO and according to the 1948 ITI Charter which states:

Since theatrical art is a universal expression of mankind, which links large groups of the world's peoples, an international professional international organization has been formed which bears the name of *International Theatre Institute*. The purpose of the Institute is to promote international exchange of knowledge and practice in theatre arts in order to establish peace and friendship between peoples, to deepen mutual understanding, to create creative co-operation between all theatre people.

The main criteria in member countries should engage in both national and international activities and are expected to assume the following maximum of responsibilities:

- a) all the professionals in the country concerned shall be informed of the existence of the Centre and of its composition;
- b) the Board of the Centre should be composed of actors elements of the professional life of the country and should if possible include a representative of each theatrical branch;
- c) the Centre should, respectively and whenever its means, provide visiting foreign professionals with the possibility of contacts and supply them with all non-financial help likely to facilitate their theatrical exposure;
- d) the Centre should, according to national needs, form study commissions charged with examining the most important problems, apart from commercial and union problems which are incumbent on other organisations;
- e) the Centre should, whenever possible, take the initiative of organising official demonstrations such as round table talks, press conferences, exhibitions, theatrical publications, etc.

History

Initially the Centre only engaged in

Continued on page 44

This month *Once A Catholic* goes on tour; here we profile its star actress

Vivien Davis — A Sensitive Young Talent

Les Cartwright

One of Melbourne's more exciting theatre performances last year came from Vivien Davis, whose portrayal of Mary Mooney in the MTC's production of *Once A Catholic* was widely praised for its sensitivity and completeness.

Although she has been acting professionally since 1977 this was Vivien's first big role. Welsh born and an immigrant to Australia at the age of 17, she started acting by accident. She was waiting for a friend to finish rehearsals for *The Affair of Giovanni Rigo* (a film in the *Mono* series). At the time, the director, Barney Hoskins badly needed someone to play the part of Tilly. She got sight of Vivien and asked her to do it, and that was it. The play ran for twelve weeks, six weeks in Adelaide and six weeks on tour for the South Australian Arts Council. While on tour the company had a grueling schedule: three shows daily of *Twelve the Clock* for children and then at the evenings, *Margaret* for adults. For Vivien "it was just like being thrown in the deep end, swimming through."

She followed this with club and TV work in a singing duo called *The Two Sisters* and a short visit the Children's Actors Theatre at Melbourne. In between she had jazz ballet classes, drama lessons for a year from Bill Zappa ("Bill's classes were real drama and I learned more from him than from anybody") and a year at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1981.

Once A Catholic provided her biggest break and it has been her biggest achievement, to date. "I mean, it. I think it's got a lot of value if the people laugh and understood it. There's a lot of subtlety in it that a lot of people didn't get. They only reacted to the water in the face gaps." Most reactions, however, were good and only a few reacted not, usually the sceptic, staunch Catholics.

Her role as Mary Mooney was both a challenge and a joy. "She was such a lovely character to play — a real sympathetic character. Her character was the hardest part to recreate for myself...she was just so innocent, and at 17 we can't pretend to be that innocent. It's got to come from something, something that you remember. Otherwise it would just have been easier. That was the hardest part of her." It was also hard to sustain "it was technical. Some nights I felt a shade at work and that was just marvelous. She was just beautiful, poor little thing."

If the actress was hard to capture what about the religion? "Ah, now the religion. The religion wasn't so hard to get hold of once you got the rules down. But there were so many rules you



Vivien Davis



Robert Elton (Father Mullerigan) with Vivien Davis as Mary Mooney in the MTC *Once A Catholic*. Photo: David Parker.

know. It must have been so surprising to be brought up as a convert in the 30's and that it was hard to believe that people actually did that, more actually did that. But it was true."

Vivien will go *Catholic* when it tours to Sydney. In the meantime she is preparing to play one of the witches in *Macbeth* and is doing some late night shows at the Last Laugh Theatre.

Remember, she would normally not go work in film and "to say all by myself with an audience."

For the present though she is more than content with work at the MTC and mainly wants to develop dual as a number of different areas. One thing above all is clear: "Vivien Davis" hasn't yet been following.

The 7th Australian National Playwrights' Conference again takes place from 6th to 20th May, 1979 in Canberra.

Mick Rodger

Artistic Director of the '78 and '79 Conferences, writes about the past history of the Conference, its philosophy, and value to Australian theatre, and its future.



The notion of annual conferences suggests a regular meeting held for the purposes of serious discussion. Many professions have their annual 'conferences' where formal papers are given on the subject confronting those professions. There is no reason why the drama profession should be a Canberra in this respect.

A professional gets together, yes, but there is a more important function of those two words in Canberra which the term 'conference' does not accurately cover. The workshoping or public reading and discussion of up to twelve new plays is the real core of the event. In that respect 'festival' might be less of a misnomer than 'conference'. On the other hand, the whole experience is aimed at teaching both participating and observing playwrights something of the craft of playwriting. This teaching is done through three exposure to the ideas, suggestions, criticisms and skills of talented theatre practitioners. In the arena the Conference does indeed 'entertain' or 'forum'.

There is no single term which will adequately describe the Canberra experience because it is a mixture of a ritual and events.

Last year the first two days were entirely devoted to the playwrights and their problems; the last four days in the professional training plant. The change in the structure of the 1978 Conference merely reflected what had been happening — in a loose and undefined way — in past years. It seemed to be successful insofar as it concentrated the necessary thinking and attention on the right things at the right time.

Thus, the first two days were composed of detailed public workshoping and informal analysis of the seven new plays chosen from the 150 submitted, together with intensive discussion on the design and staging problems posed by

those plays, informal public readings of, and discussion on, the additional ten new plays, and teaching seminars, held almost every day, on problems of practical benefit to fledgling playwrights, such as design, stage production and lighting, what is 'actable', theatre music and how to earn one's living as a playwright.

The final two days, by comparison, were concerned with sessions on topics of interest to the theatrical profession as a whole, eg. theatre subsidy: how, which, amount to much attention and heated debate that it was extended into an improvised additional session early the next morning. The features of the Old Time and Theatre Australia respectively, large and small scale touring in Australia, the problems of being an 'itinerant worker' in the profession, and a close look at subsidised theatre and its alternatives in South Australia.

Scattered through the last four days of the Conference were the final rehearsals and discussions on the workshoped plays. In this respect, the Conference becomes a steep window, of sorts for new works and a number of theatrical managers come to see the works. While this is an inevitable by-product of a situation where the peak of the country's new plays by largely unknown authors, are being worked on, it is not a primary function of the Conference nor one which is particularly encouraged. The benefits of the Conference are more hidden and varied than that.

While the lot of new plays, which have found their way on to the stages of professional theatres via the Conference, is an impressive one, it is not in itself an argument for the merits or value of the Conference. Indeed plays are sometimes chosen because of the clear potential of the writer concerned. If such a writer can be exposed to the noticeable valuable Conference workshop of his play by highly skilled professional directors and actors, then we have contributed considerably to his future development. Out of the writer's experience at the Conference might come another and first new play in the future.

From time to time the theatre companies do workshop or publicly read new works. The MTC, the National Theatre and the Princes Theatre all have a considerable record in this respect. Recently the QTC advertised a playwrights' competition — another valid attempt to encourage new writing. But such companies do not have the time, energy, money or staff to do this work consistently.

It is sometimes said that it is unfair to expose vulnerable young writers to the harsh analysis which their plays are given at Canberra. Certainly the texts are inevitably given a very gritty, but by no means by uncompromising professionals but I cannot see that this is any great injustice for the playwright than having

his work eventually assessed in the theatre by the reviewers and the public. The Conference workshop process is not a cruel destructive tearing of the play back from him; nor is it demanded that the writer must justify everything that he has written.

Rather, at its best, the process is a creative dialogue. The writer is shown, by the several reviewers of his text, what works and what does not. The study reserves clarification of the text and to inform ideas from the writer. Together, creatively, they explore the virtues proved of a new play and not its according to their talents and interests. The decisions and decisions made this process carefully and methodically probing, exploring, accepting and suggesting.

Sometimes, in the end of the fortnight, the can have only explored part of the future of a particular play. Time has run out and some of the play has been left unexplored. It does not matter. The object is not to conclude the workshop with the definitive version of the ideal 'finished' script. The process has a creative and learning end, and most important that the product, the means are more important than the end.

The format for the 1979 Conference will continue to develop the innovations of last year's Conference. It will again be divided into a ten-day teaching and workshop period, and a five-day professional conference. Furthermore, we shall again have a resident designer (which, when tried for the first time last year, proved most successful). New teaching seminars in 1979 will consider the problems peculiar to writing for film and for television, with the possible future of musical drama in Australia, with the adaptation problems of writing the book of the film of the play of the book — and a further seminar on writing specifically for children's theatre as a contribution to the Year of the Child. In the five-day professional conference we hope to consider the development, problems and prospects of setting up a new State Theatre Company in NSW to fill the vacuum left by the closure of the Old Time. Seven new plays will be workshoped at the 1979 Conference and up to a further seven new plays will receive a public reading and discussion.

Looking further ahead, I can not at time when I will not only be doubtful, but necessary, for the Australian Playwrights' Conference to have a similar status, and level of funding arrangements, as its American and Canadian counterparts and one which would reflect its new national importance. It might remark in passing that positive moves are now afoot in London to shortly set up a British Playwrights' Conference!

In America the Playwrights' Conference dates on a year-round basis with an ever

Continued on page 26.

At a cost of \$1½ million the Hunter Valley Theatre Co. now has a home

Civic Playhouse: Can bricks ensure permanence?

Felicity Biggins

Despite the fact that the critics deemed it impossible, the sceptics needed their heads of it and the directors of the Hunter Valley Theatre Company were divided. The Hunter Region now has a playhouse.

The fact that the Civic Playhouse is a reality is due to the determination of the company's board of directors and particularly its chairman John Robson. The board is responsible for envisaging the construction of the playhouse, establishing a building committee to raise the funds and ensuring the construction of the Hunter Valley Theatre Company Architects Brent Suters as well as Robson has been a major motivation behind the playhouse. The theatre belongs to the people of Newcastle and the Hunter Valley, and is owned by the Hunter Valley Theatre Company.

But although the birth of the Playhouse is greeted with universal pride and excitement, it could be dark within six months. The Hunter Valley Theatre Company is expected to run out of money by June. Robson, while agreeing that the company has only short-term funding, is optimistic about its future; the company has funds until after June, budgeting on a 50% less office grant-in-aids than it is fairly sure of getting. He expects to run much higher than 50% less office with Calvert, our first production in the Playhouse, and are hoping for a State Government supplementary grant.

Calvert is expected to lose about \$15,000, less than the budgeted \$21,000. Mr Robson said the company would not cease to function when the performance money ran out. "We will explore every possible use for the Playhouse — for training companies, local groups, concerts and various activities and will do everything possible to keep the theatre open," he said. "But it will be dark for some periods of the year. We hope, however, by 1980 to be operating for a high proportion of the year. Response to The Club and early response to Calvert indicates that Newcastle does want professional theatre. There is no doubt as to the emotional future of the company. If Calvert is successful, we will be in a — not better position to ask for further operating grants."

While John Robson may be optimistic that it is just a question of the company proving itself to make the grants flow Newcastle way, the State Government is not so sure. The Director of the Premier's Department a Division of Cultural Activities, Evan Williams, said that funds for 1979 were fully committed. He could not guarantee any further money for the HVTC this year and his remarks suggest it will be unlikely the company will receive any more money. The



The set for Calvert in the new Civic Playhouse. Photo: Tony Haydon-Cox.

last was a phony and financial disaster and a full busted. Financially up and down with a poor reputation within its community, the company went into an intended state and was only saved by the diligent optimism of its supporters.

Theatre supporters have mixed views about the Playhouse. While many are excited and thrilled with the result, several argue that the theatre's inaccessibility does not compensate for its good points.

These arguments, while not denying the desirability of a theatre, claim it is too small and impractical and does not justify its \$1½ million building costs. They claim that a 200 seat theatre can never hope to pay its way and it should never have been built within the limiting Civic Westwarping; and that the inevitable closure of the HVTC will mean the Playhouse may be empty, or at least not fully used.

There is already talk of the need for a bigger theatre when and if the HVTC expands. But a debate whether it would ever be able to raise the sort of money needed a second time around. When questioned on the prospects of the Cultural Affairs Division supplying funds for another theatre in Newcastle, Mr Williams was very guarded.

He acknowledged that the theatre was too small to be the permanent home of a company with no audience, but he could not guarantee that the Division would think brevity of life of giving more money. The State Government has already donated \$70,000 to the Playhouse, and recently granted \$40,000 to the company for production costs this year.

In spite of the general excitement and enthusiasm that surrounds the Playhouse, and which includes endorsement from the Premier, Mr Wran, and the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, All Councillors, some people have expressed concern that the theatre is a potential waste of money. When the HVTC runs out of performing money who will use the theatre? The

cost of running a playhouse enough but what about the company's future? Knowing they will only be able to attract 100 people a night?

Critics say the stage is too small, the theatre too cramped. Some ask why it was not built longways in the Westwarping instead of south ways. Others say a theatre expert should have been consulted. Many do not approve of the site chosen.

The concerns are valid, but Suters and Robson argue that the stage is flexible and that the location must be accepted as a necessary reality to the theatre's existence, no location, no theatre. The Civic Westwarping seemed the most logical choice because of its ideal location next door to the Civic Theatre, and its availability.

Theatre supporters, delighted with the positive fact that Newcastle has a professional theatre company and a solid theatre say that continuous discussion led to be made to get the theatre built was a question of compromise. A little positive thinking goes a long way — and although theatre companies do not survive on good will and enthusiasm alone, a little enthusiasm and faith helps.

The Hunter Valley Theatre Company is looking at bricks about the theatre (it is not fully paid for just about the audience will they come) and about its future. But considering the use of imagined realism that preceded the building of the Playhouse is common, it is a natural trade and preservationist achievement.

The City Council approved the building itself over it, leasing it to the HVTC at \$15 a week, with the money for the initial construction cost by a building appeal. The theatre has cost \$25,000. The appeal has raised in pledges and cash, \$21,000. The company is claiming another \$30,000 from the State Government on a dollar for dollar rebates, leaving the appeal about \$12,000 short. That does not include in-

Continued on page 44

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GENTLEMEN ONLY

Hoopla's hit musical is likely to tour.
PETER CORRIGAN designed it and
 notes his ideas.
RENNIE ELLIS took the photographs.

James MacArthur as The Maestro



Steve Prohm as Freddie



Notes to director GRAEME BLUNDELL:

This is not a drag show, it is more in the style of a masquerade.

The dancer can certainly look at the idea of men's attire, but only more so.

The large crowd and excited Algy (Bertie Hobbes) is in black rubber. The green hat is a soft work, complaint at. The vest and trim is a faded black brocade. He is a braggart.

Freddie (Alan Parker), the second rat, is in a black shark skin type of silk. The hat is cold and glimmering. The vest and trim is a black shantung. He is a cynic.

Bobby (John McGibbon) the boarding newly wed buffoon is in black velvet. The dress is one of a naive adolescent with a Gaudinough quality. The vest and trim is a black corded velvet. He is a puppy.

Bertie (Malcolm Kagen), the naive Earl Flynn really 'hear' it is an expensive black wool. This lends him a particularly rakish dash. The vest and trim is of a charcoal brocade. He is a peacock.

All the costs and effects are based with the latest criticism and some of all club members use the same majestic Lower East side Jewish tailor.

The Maestro (James MacArthur) is in a black wool. He seems to enjoy keeping her top hat and Edwardian cloak on.

Bobby and Henry (Evelyn Kruger and Joan Breckinridge) are in closely tailored flannel uniforms of the period. The trousers are full and the cuffs are pegged to give added line to the top trousers. Their individual "blue and green" should never be seen" colour schemes should guarantee that they are not mistaken for club members or the ones in luncheon. Evelyn can talk her car/hander for cap.

The set should be reminiscent of that Yale Club dining room photo I showed you recently. You might remember Graeme that during your stay in New York I pointed out the building, it is opposite Grand Central Station but I neglected to take you in. Gentlemen only.

The costumes will have a solid look to them, no capitals etc. If the particular powder goes (marble with the black vases chosen for the columns, stairs and floor can be "laminated", these should be a confident set of claying equipment. The Empire State and the Chrysler Building can be seen in all directions.

The four large cubes "Venus de Milos" will look rather like badly polished marble. They have small shells instead of heads. This seems to be what the evening is about. Men talk about the women in their lives, who allegedly have nothing between their ears, and do all their thinking with their toes.

I think these ideas coincide with the direction you've described. The play is a distinctly New York feminist piece. But the level of consciousness is somewhat higher than that locally. Thus for any points to be made, I suggest the evening requires a folklore style, which reveals itself as much in design as in the timing and dancing.



Hoopla production Gentlemen Only Photo: Rennie Ellis

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The *Bastard from the Bush* starring Robin Ramsay began in Melbourne, was acclaimed in London and is now playing in Sydney.

Photo: Robert Hall/Orbit



Director Co-compiler

RODNEY FISHER

talks to REX CRAMPHORN



The framework of this interview is a chronological account of the progress of *The Bastard from the Bush*. Rodney's digressions and general observations are given, as they occurred during the account, in the first person.

The initial impetus for the work came from Robin Ramsay: the long-standing enthusiasm for Lawson developed into positive feelings of affinity when he discovered that Lawson spent some of his later life near Rags where Roddy has his own farm. He decided to compile a new story drawn from Lawson's writing and early in 1976 he came to Sydney to do the initial research at the Mitchell Library. He called his programme *The Name and Taste of Ramsay's Mind* (Lawson's codicil for the bush) and on returning to the Melbourne Theatre Company for *The Merchant of Venice* he showed the rough script to John Sommer who accepted it for production

at Russell Street, while suggesting that a more controversial title be found.

At the same time (April, 1977) Roddy had returned from London to direct the first production of David Williamson's *The Club* for the Melbourne Theatre Company. After reading Robin's script he agreed to become his director and collaborator on the project, now renamed *The Bastard from the Bush*.

"I knew straight away that I wanted to do it...for several reasons. Robin's obvious affinity with Lawson was very interesting. And Lawson himself? A portrait of the artist as a young

parish. He really does personify the colored experience of the artist. It fascinates me that the group experience of my own family at Dayton — countryside surrounded by a neighbour, Scott Radd — so Vance Palmer and Louis Esson, the young Tarkis whose more relaxed eyes saw further than Lawson's, but whose dream of a self-empowering national literature and theatre left them as consumed as Lawson had been."

Rehearsing *The Club* by day and reading Lawson by night, Roddy assembled references and ideas for the programme and as soon as *The Club* opened he began working on those with



Robert during the day, returning to the typewriter while Robert played *Shylock* at night. The concept of the script as a series of linked pieces was soon replaced by a more ambitious one — a play for one actor, a flowing, autobiographical revelation of Lawrence in his own words.

"Robert presented me with a phone blaring Chak on Lawrence's 'an Australian Mafia, half concert hall boy, half devil...' which he saw as a crystallisation of his own understanding of Lawrence. Of course, Robert had taken the phone to heart because it attacked those aspects of his own personality which resembled Lawrence's. The potential of this system — given Robert's technical inexperience and responsive plasticity — made me confident that we could attempt a total recreation of Lawrence."

The first performance was given at Russell Street in September 1977. The nine-week season

achieved an excellent audience and critical response.

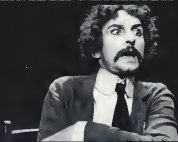
"Looking back, I see it very much as a first try out. I enjoy the Russell Street space but, in this case it was not ideal, perhaps I did not use it to its best advantage. The programme was less ambitious then — nevertheless, the Lawrence movement of artistic endeavour transcendental optimism and dogged humour as the face of rejection and perseverance — was perceived and Robert's performance was much praised."

After the Russell Street season some months passed — Rodney in Sydney doing *Obsessive Behaviour* in Small Spaces for the Old Tote and then going to London, Robert doing *Shylock* in Sydney and Adelaide for Marned. Rodney was about to return home when Robert called him from Australia to suggest that they attempt to present *The Secret from the Bush* in London. It took almost six months, from the time Robert

joined Rodney, to achieve this aim.

"I suppose those months of northern summer last June, July and August were the worst of the *Secret* story. Signed up for Riverside, we worried about the show's potential to reach a non-Australian audience and about our own potential to make cake meet in the wilderness. Until then it had been mostly cooking; there were a few Irish-offs, naturally, but Irishie were kind and encouraging — Carmichael, Grant, Ian McKellan and particularly Sam Kinnear whose parents arranged a private performance in their living room for among others, Sebastian Graham-Smith and Keith Jarrett from the National Theatre. The very next day, announcing the Riverside's artistic disinterest, we were advised at interval that *The Secret* was wanted for a season in September."

When the play opened at the Riverside Studios in September there were about thirty bookings for



the first night lost by various minor costs of the offstage men fall and, as a result of a good pace response and confident work of mouth the teams will well and extra performance were given.

That of *The Doctor's Secret* was the result of being present at the Sydney production which being World described in *The Times* as a "preliminary" the list of which can be found reviews also in London. I felt in the with the physical aspect of the old BBC studio, splendidly converted by Peter and Roger (and in the for the production of the *Doctor's Secret* in the Sydney afternoon in January 1958 when I saw in early production of *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* by Alex McCowan in London with Peter Gilk's wonderful production of *The Cherry Orchard* I thought to myself 'I don't care where in London I'd rather work' And by some strange magic, some months later, Robin was performing *The Doctor from the Bush* in studios with Peter Gilk's much acclaimed production of *The Changeling*.

The National had hoped to transfer the play to the Criterion for their Festival of London programme but owing to a change of planning, the season of one-man shows including Cyril Cusack's James Joyce creations and John Gielgud's concertos had to be postponed. Meanwhile Robin returned to Australia. Rodney was to the dance company at the Festival State Opera to manage a ballet by had had a collaboration with Lynn Seymour, and Michael was interested in the idea of a Sydney festival of *The Doctor from the Bush*.

"For many years it had been satisfying to produce *Lawson* successfully as an idea, experiment. The experiment we had made to stage the screenplay to a wider audience had enhanced the script and only two alterations have occurred to me for the National season: suddenly I realised exactly where to place 'An Old Man of my Father's' the funeral of our had never quite reached home and also it happened in a way to incorporate 'The Fair at the Tower'."

You see, the present state of the work is the result of three distinct seasons/periods together with quite a large number of performances: more that kind of continuity of work pure handbook breakdown. And I think that *The Doctor from the Bush* is a demonstration that a company — effect a company of two — can sometimes escape the conventional that too often business creativity in Australia (though — too little analysis and rehearsal, too little care and attention to detail by those companies oriented with the overall shape of a season, too little concern for actors' work, too little respect for authors' work, and too much preoccupation with the overweening importance of evening nights).

The National season opened on the 16th March. Tony Thynn had directed the Melbourne production, Simon Curtis had supervised the London presentation but for the first time, in Sydney, Rodney took charge of mounting the history of the setting — the bush, how and the

landscape — which had always remained constant in his mind. The atmosphere and accompaniment of the performance was recorded on by all the critics and, despite a disappointing private concert, perhaps, by the pleasure of *Lawson* programme in Sydney, the *Doctor's Secret* has been full every night since opening and an attention of the season is being focused.

"The National season has given us the first chance, quite relaxed and private performance, to fully explore an intimate relationship with a whole audience: the trained and hearing recipient of the almost totally dead, deeply self-conscious, yet often angry, *Lawson*. And Robin is able to give a little from the broader, more human aspects developed by and for larger audiences. It is a most stimulating way to work and more audience grow more devoted. Drawing on the support and working understanding we have developed over three years Robin and I are now beginning work on a future one-man show."

I have collaborated with and reacted to the tastes of critics. At present my collaboration with Lynn Seymour is being followed by Gordon Gifford who shows that two men Gifford is a State-run company are certainly not better than one, and my collaboration with David Williamson. It has proved the last production of his last three plays has been written, temporarily I trust, by coincidence of money and theatre politics.

"In retrospect, one of the most important steps in the development of *The Doctor from the Bush* came through the Melbourne and London seasons with the publication of Michael Clark's *In Search of Henry Lawson* — an surprising affirmation of our view of *Lawson*. Professor Clark had loved the play in Melbourne, particularly Robin's characterization of him. Since his book re-examines the perception of *Lawson* as the colonial artist as a visionary — patronised, indulged but never regarded seriously — who began his literary, as part of his head-on-down European struggle (however simply and in however understood a way), that act in the lifeblood of society and the very foundation of social consciousness and development, and who noted his days with the awful realisation that art can be seen as a parasite and thus the artist can easily be rejected out of hand. The disintegration of early ideals and the emotional acceptance of impermanence and loneliness are, in *Lawson*'s case, the final symptoms of this rejection."

Michael Clark's perception of this and of *Lawson*'s philosophical opinions caused a force in Australia and the controversy spread to London newspapers — coincidentally with the *Doctor's Secret* season. Suddenly I was being interviewed by the BBC and quoted in *The Listener* — all of which was good publicity but also, and much more importantly, an unexpected confirmation of the relevance and contemporary truth of the work Robin and I had been doing.

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T.A. proudly announces that IRVING WARDLE major theatre critic of *The Times* (at present in abeyance) will be covering London theatre each month from now on.

KEEPING OPTIONS OPEN

Irving Wardle

The one thing to be said in favour of Britain's present national television is it allows the theatre to show at least one committed actor other than the disease of institutional paralysis. I have lost count of the number of hapless new talents that have soared up some years later as dumb pillars of the community, highly responsible script editors and the like (not forgetting the supremely job-conscious case of theatre critics). But there can't much completion to bury yourself alive in BBC Television or the National Theatre if those institutions are cackling at the state.

My guess is that they will survive in spite of the situation — now in Britain — that has major producing organisations are now at the mercy of stage plays with no interest in whether the show goes on or not but if it does come to a war with the unions it is the big companies that will collapse, and the fringe that will stay in business along with self-help units like Peter Galle's Riverside Studios and Thelma Holt's Round House (recently converted into London's first theatre in the round with the aid of volunteer labour and cast price materials).

The message for the artist is clear: keep your options open. Buy a Monocle if you must, but don't abandon the old tale in the shed. And from the material that is getting into the West End, hatched from small houses around the country, written and directed by men who have plenty of other outlets, it appears that the message has sunk in well before the present level of creative differences with the line.

Much the most conspicuous of the not least famous is Alan Ayckbourn, the undisputed master of West End comedy. The annual

Ayckbourn play is a most fixed institution that anything else can resemble from the formula entertainment days of H.M. Tennant Ltd, and if Ayckbourn had been operating then he would doubtless have followed Sturges and Fry into some half-imperial House-Comedian revival. As it is, Ayckbourn famously works the year round in his little repertory theatre in Scarborough, and brings his annual play into London a year after it has been seen in Yorkshire. *Joking Apart*, for instance, opened at the Globe in mid-March and the morning after the opening Ayckbourn was spending back North to celebrate its sequel, *Sensory Feedback*, for a European tour.

This may be the moment for me to disassociate myself from my grudging critical collapse, and declare *Joking Apart* to be Ayckbourn's most perfectly controlled work to date. It is a play about life — about the games the theatre can play with time, and about the wounds time inflicts on human life. The whole thing takes place in the spacious garden of Richard and Andrea, a pair blessed with everything the good farms have to bestow, who keep open house to those less favoured than themselves. Their number: Andrea's hopelessly tooth-carrying adolescent, a rabble-rousing neighbour's vice and his tyrannically spiteful wife, and Richard's French business partner, the luminously capricious Sven.

We first meet them all at a bedtime party in the late sixties: then, in a series of four-year leaps, the play remorselessly moves up to the present showing the collapse of everyone surrounding the garden central couple.

In general terms, you can see it all coming from the start, but what counts, as always, is the detail of how it happens. We learn that Sven is



Alison Steadman, John Fellenow, Jennifer Parry and Robert Austin in the Globe's *Joking Apart*. Photo: Dennis Stevenson. Publicity

finally going to leave. We do not know that he is going to suffer his personal defeat in the moment of creating successfully all that seems count only to discover that Richard has been playing left-handed to us to give him the illusion of winning. The tennis match (reminiscent with a hysterical-humorous scene on the sidelines, in the kind of virtuoso not good Ayckbourn's customers have come to expect) is as well up to his usual standard, but the real excitement of the comedy lies not in its comic parts, but in passages where he deliberately brings the action to a stop, delaying us to laugh, passages set in dead time where you observe the next events taking shape in the still as like crystals in a glass of poison. Clearly, as Ayckbourn is now writing it suggests a slow bicycle race, with characters simultaneously on the point of tumbling down a steep dark pit. Very funny, and very laughing matter.

After prolonged waiting, William Gaskill — late of Devon's Royal Court and Oliver's National Theatre — has joined Peter Hall's National Theatre team with the purpose of monitoring the water directly-pool Oliver audiences. This is not a matter of getting the creative to work, that has now been given up; it has come that for the proliferation of the South Bank Board, Hall would have asked it up. It is a matter of achieving consensus without a two-mile march, deciding whether Dorey Lusher's thrust stage is better used as an oblique promenade and gradually dispersing the "top theatre" by which his father-in-law dominated the address.

As to staging, nothing very conclusive



Brenda Blethyn and Ralph Richardson in the National Theatre's *The Friends of Ensigns*. Photo: Donald Cooper

International

emerged from Gaskill's inaugural production of *Moulin Rouge* and Benley's *A Fair Queen* in NATITE (the main technical union) had selected it as a strategic target and the company were kept off the stage until the last minute and then obliged to play on an makeshift set. The idea of Gaskill and his designer Haydn Griffin had been to extend the motif of the quest for the actor play by mounting it as a rural dwelling platform, achieving quick entrances through a crowd of on-stage spectators and up through a central trap.

All well and good, except that the trap had no door and instead of revealing characters rapidly onto the stage, it remained virtually unused throughout the evening, not an important source of peril during Nicky Haason and Fred Pearson's fight. As far as stage management goes, the Olivier appeared to much better advantage in Christopher Marlowe's subsequent production of *The Faith of Our Fathers*, which repeated the essential problems of time by crowding every inch of the stage with handsome furnishings and stage detail, so as to elaborate Tolson's hard purchase margin between those various payments and the worthless penny rate on intricately designed belts of class distinctions.

In the long run, though, I suspect that once well emerged from Gaskill's masterly analysis work that from any number of prodigal blow-outs on design, *A Fair Queen* may have come across like an anatomy lecture, but you certainly understood the body by the end. The organic links between the flesh and subplots, the inter-relationships between various codes of Jacobean language, the handling of the staff. This was achieved through exceptionally close ensemble playing, which brings me back to the question of ensembles.

Gaskill's cast consisted mainly not of regular National Theatre actors, but of the team he had built up for his fringe outfit, the Joint Stock Company. With Peter actor he had spent several months over an adaptation of Robert Truett's *The Ragged Pioneers*, a long-term project which included a touring spell in Devon where they moved into an old farmhouse to learn about painting and decorating through doing the job. The production, when it arrived in London last year, was justly acknowledged as a majoristic triumph. And whatever his commitments in South Bank, Gaskill remains in Scotland in the other world of poverty budgeting, not prolonged research work.

The irony in all this is that when *The Ragged Pioneers* Philadelphia emerged as one of the most persuasively impassioned arguments for Tinseltown over to reach the British stage, the notion that Gaskill had his crumpling troops into the National Theatre that the impressive backdrop in the shape of the NATITE depicts, almost killing his next show. However, the Appleboms, and in her part-time institutionalism it could maintain, he has a world before

LETTERS

(Continued from page 4)

of Mr Shoolbridge has any but second-hand experience of Glasgow theatre to support his conclusions. Then to me there is critical validity in doubt for if you remove the political content of his review, it is empty indeed.

Really, this is not an isolated incidence. Often, no matter what field of endeavour certain vocal professions pursue, the clarity of the vision is blurred by the dictates of their political hatred, until they lose all credibility.

We in the West have committed similar blunders of thought in writing during the 1930s, when we belated our reports, who denied the poverty of thought of the Communist system, until the appearance of a Sputnik in the sky made these hundreds of self-righted experts redundant overnight.

I hope you keep up the good work and that Theatre Australia will not allow itself to become a vehicle of decorated ideas.

Yours faithfully
A. Lerner,
Appleboms WA

Dear Sir,

Well worth my subscription as I consider Theatre Australia to be I have noted one area of interest to your readers that is in the decline of and entirely absent and that is the lack of attention to amateur theatre.

I realise there are difficulties in reviewing amateur productions because of their ephemeral nature but articles need not be regular in reviews or patronising advice as is sometimes seen. Might I suggest that you look in on reviews such as the one coming up in Newcastle, there are often valuable in standard but contain some gaps. Perhaps the adjudicator could report — or you might send your own reporter as I find myself fairly marginalised without advice.

As a second suggestion might not the reinforcement of amateur theatre be analysed and experienced first as it may be encouraged in the area I might emphasize that few amateur groups capitulate to unique problems and advantages they have over professional companies such as local documentary theatre of the Peter C. Greenberg type.

A third suggestion. Would it be valuable to interview experienced amateur directors, designers etc. (How do you construct a play set before World War I to a high standard for \$150? I have of circumstances where this was done).

A fourth suggestion. If such a person exists, might not some suitable professional be commissioned to write on, or interview on, applying his skills in solving such difficulties in amateur theatre regularly breach. Not to make the "How to apply the sophisticated hand of make-up" sort of thing. Marc the "What has Harold, Old Tom, Sydney Theatre Company

etc, learned from annual programme selection that might be applicable to an amateur group's programme selection policy", or the like.

A fifth suggestion. There are a number of venues throughout our state that go used by amateurs in particular, and professionals occasionally, as theatres. Not all these were designed for such use. Some like Clabbe Hall in Melbourne have little to be desired. Others, councils and architects need suggesting for. Might such not be reported upon?

Sixth. There are theatres available to amateur theatre. Some are trivial and yet valuable. Should they be used? Why? Or Why not? Are they primarily used?

Seventh. What sort of exposure do Australian playwrights getting in the amateur level? After all — to use that wilying cliché — that's where the pros make are.

Eighth. Most former campaigns for a professional amateur theatre yet in my experience the amateur musical theatre is thriving. Why?

Ninth. Several universities are now teaching drama. One might expect some impact first at the level of amateur theatre. Is this so? If so, how?

Tenth. Professional actors seem loath to create any amateur background they might have. Yet I suspect in many have this to thank as, for example, M.D.s. Has not professional theatre anything to thank our amateur theatre for? What relationships exist?

Eleventh. There are a number of professional directors who direct amateur productions, from time to time — often with the use of subsidy. Should their work be reviewed regularly by you? I think so. Different some commentators in the Australia Council like a report, and that's it. Based in oblivion. Do these directors owe their money and are their efforts justified? Only you can tell.

Twelfth. Years ago the Arts Council of NSW was formed to send theatre to the country. If it has been successful that should manifest itself in one form as an improvement in amateur theatre. Has it? We do not know. Perhaps a look at these shows can be very reliable.

There are sufficient points here for more articles looking at amateur theatre I am sure. If any of them prompt you to look more closely at the amateur for more than I will be grateful.

Yours faithfully
W F Oakes
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DUSA, FISH, STAS AND VI

ROGER PULVERS

Dusa, Fish, Stas and Vi Four Corners, Canberra Rep at Theatre 1 ACT 7 11 March 1978 Director: Anne Godfrey Smith Musical director: Joseph Vekris Lighting director: Terry Higgins, Tony Morgan Understudy: Anne Vella Music: Paul Joyce Musician: Sue, John Bell Vi Caroline Rogg (producer)

Someone said that books are two years behind society, film three, and TV about five or six. I don't think that theatre would come next. This play is dated fairly in quite significant ways. Four women are presented. The anorectic pop-child of the seventies, slightly hungover from the previous decade. The flak 'woman', working her way through men's bodies into refuge. The straight lady, a partially abandoned mother. And the political activist who can't trust herself away from her boyfriend.

It is billed as a comedy, and a comedy it should be, as the characters are work types, and their times, remote, separate. The production, however, by Anne Godfrey Smith, chose the usual

satiricist's method of the basically sane society with a small circle of an inside a big continuous black stage. The delivery of lines was slow and ponderous most of the time. This weighed the presentation down. Another thing which held it down was the long sentences and even reconstructed by the staging. This staging and slowness put the characters at a safe, 50 to 100 ft, from which they reached out to the audience with great difficulty. It felt very much as I was on the sidelines looking at, only rarely glimpsing, someone having.

One very fine element of the production was the use, by the director, of a female chorus dressed in black, sitting on the side. The music, by Joseph Vekris and the lyrics by the director himself, combined in a pleasant and strongly moving effect. The chorus interpreted the sadness of the situation of the women for us.

One concrete example of how the staging didn't come to terms with the huge Theatre 1 space. In the second act an ambulance is called. Stas, the blonde woman, goes to meet it at the front door and tells the men to go around back. As we hear from her no longer, we assume she went with them. Later, however, a telephone call

comes for her and, called back, she runs in from the front. What was she doing there at such an emergency, standing around? She should either have gone back or immediately or gone around back with the ambulance.

Another problem, which was felt throughout, was one of voice. While each actor had individual moments of true style, in general their voices were being forced out of control. The production was too monotonous and the pitch too high. This was no doubt because the director knew some of them strung together better to an effect, were not working within the confines of a straight satiricist's direction.

This is a play about female meaning, relying on the same sort of humour and caricature exaggeration as plays about male meaning. When it is serious and philosophical, it tends to be muddled or, worse, arch, usually, as when Stas says that what's important in this world is the last fifty years of physics and the next fifty of biology. And, unfortunately in a curious way, it reinforces the notion that women are flighty and mostly emotion-based people who just cannot cope in the end. In this sense, the play is not only stereotypic, it's backward looking.

Executed not performed

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

MARGUERITE WELLS

The Sound of Music Music by Richard Rodgers. Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Book by Howard Lindsay and Ernest Lehman. Canberra Philharmonic Society in the Playhouse, Canberra Theatre Centre. Opened 18 February 1979. Producer: Elton Gray. Conductor: John Haydon. Stage Director: John Haydon.

Singers who can act seem to be far more rare and precious things than actors who can sing. Perhaps a good voice is a gift and the ability to act is a skill, whereas the ability to act is a gift which may be refined by skill. If singing requires more, then there are fewer people who can do it well. Why then do amateur companies spend so much money on Broadway type musicals when the audience are so heavily weighted against them? After all, how many times will a year go by before the next jukebox doesn't work and? Quite a few, thank goodness. I think it was Shaw who said to one of those advertising people that there are fifty people who enjoy a good tune, for every one who would prefer a poem. I didn't believe him at the time, but now I am older and

wiser. There wouldn't be a pop music industry if people cared what the words of songs said. And there wouldn't be a *Sound of Music* if people required that the lyrics of a musical be regarded as the music that carried it. So when musical directors cast singers hoping that they can, they are probably only doing what most of their audience would do given half a chance.

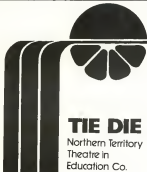
All that makes for good cheer (as for the large cast and the enormous backstage crew, and a nice night out for an audience who doesn't see much theatre. It does not make for great art. Canberra Philharmonic's production, with a cast of one actor (Dan Fletcher, who played Max), and a large number of singers with voices ranging from very sweet to really beautiful (suffered from this. "Well, you can sing, so we hope you can act too", mutters, but it had neither and slightly worse one. It was a production which was obviously going to pieces in the act.

Last year's highly successful production had obviously been reserved and consisted on a grand and extremely professional of traditional scale. The set accommodated the frequent scene changes with the minimum of fuss, the cast knew their lines, they shaped the songs in a most decorative way, they knew their dances and executed them well. It was all very ICW. But that was what was wrong. They were executing, not performing. The joy had gone, and sadly

enough, the problem was the cause. The only part of the music which was unusually pleasant were the main choruses — and they were unaccompanied. The orchestra played out of tune and mostly without precision, kept right time like an incoherent machine, and failed to accommodate the music to the singers. It also drowned the singers' voices. Even Shirley Thomson's beautiful voice did not show up as best as it was. Of "Climb every mountain" song lyrics may as well be behind several rows of overhead curtains. "Climb every mountain" went straight up the flytower.

The set with revolving corner stages down right and left, and shoulder-high cylinders of Austrian Alps, pretties and picturesque in front of the cyclers was presented well, but the lighting was at best perfunctory. The lighting was obviously four lights reflecting behind a screen, and the blue mountain sky was never anything but sky blue — not the glow of the face of a cloud, and certainly no mountain sunsets. So many opportunities were lost.

And still, while there were certainly dry eyes, so the tears that were also certainly sticky ones — were included. And there were good laughs too for at times, among the paps, there were some extremely wide ones, quite well deserved. I do wish I'd seen it last year, before it had had a chance to start deteriorating.



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PROGRAM TERM ONE 1979

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YEAR OF THE CHILD



Firm and sensitive direction

INNER VOICES

Age Group	Percentage
18-29	85
30-39	75
40-49	65
50-59	55
60-69	45
70-79	35
80+	15

James Finney for design; Steven Greenberg, Tuckering & Company, interior design; Wiggins, 1974, Optical March, 10, Executive Studio, Jacksonville; and light by design. Stephen Turner, executive director, 1000 Market.

[illegible]

Enter Volcan. Leon Nieves's market reputation about steel manipulation at the Buenos Aires stock exchange received first and sensitive treatment by *El Nuevo Sur* during March as the operator for the Riverina Trading Company's *El Sur* mine.

Manipulation of thinking is itself a subject containing high dramatic potential and Soviet scholars would be counterproductive, and baffling and wrong psychics in studying the destruction of a young Russian state's domestic mind by external forces.

But if the play is essentially and irreducibly for an unswerving of emotional self-theory, it accomplishes the great central aim of novel domination. Thus *Inner Voices* is also a sharply observed study of opportunistic platitudes, fears, ambitions and propensities even if the far-from-probable successes of events in the story may bring a hypothetical audience to the brink of uncontrolled laughter.

Partly this is the result of Maslow's almost automatic technique. When there were fewer words there were more automatic continuity, partly a result of the playwright's obvious desire to place psychological explanation as a first consideration. Thus the young one here rightly demands the play's fabric: everything else is secondary to the man of conviction that governs the strange character's actions and allowing for the aspects of improbability the play is an absorbing and challenging experience.

The first error in the Trading Company's performance was a modest lack of consideration both in setup and production terms. To be sure, the play's opening scenes, during which the officers, Mervyn and Leo hatch their scheme of kidnapping and poisoning, were flawed, with Eric Harley and Sandy McConnon achieving merely occasional synergy and with the fairly amiable Harley never really adapting to a murderous scheme. But from the point at which Leo is dispatched, McInnes and his small cast struck their vital pit. Peter Clure's brief role as a waiter of uncolored



St. Louis, Mo. by Pouch and Peter O'Leary (found in the *Kennedy* *Knitting Company* production of *Lower Merion*).

honesty is both thrilling and wryly funny and never less than compelling. Sandy McCutcheon is the hidden, powerful Vietnam-period, strange characterisation that when he was playing Leno, and Ric Marley brought the swagger to the complex Mervyn. On the other hand Sandra Hedin was perhaps too committed to the persona, and some West Indianist stereotypes.

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Stephen Ames, using a series of suspended geometric shapes surrounding a centrally seated performing area, well-composed and dramatic atmospheric tone of the play, and his lighting was used skilfully to build mood, but I think the production would have benefited by the use of incidental music on border scenes shifts.

Connecticut Government — is a replica of the London one, the programme merely mentions "history by" — did it not require deepening? Bishop's devotion is sharp though word has it no more than a caricature of the previous West End production. How nice for him to be so apparently unconstructed give a few days (about 1900) and a few more.

It is all very well for him and Malyce Neron to talk of doing plays "of the best of their kind there" and "excellence" severely in 74 Macbeth. But Malyce Neron at least also said "theater should always be a devastating experience for both actors and audience," yet this does not look true on his other *Thou-Art*, with similar checks but more truth.

Levin, speaking through his character (and with best editors Rosemary's Reply and Barry from *Black Under the Hood*) concerns himself only with the pay off. The play has enormous validity (two men, five characters, one act) — *intensity* and the "utterly hard exposure" (Levin) which assures that there is not even a touch of sentimentalism. When the act becomes as mechanically predictable as that, and has no concern whatever for quality (none of the ideas play around on as much or depth than a bit of little more value than the USA, state policy, etc. issues).

Better than last year's
travesty
OTHELLO

ANTHONY BARKLEY

[illegible]

The *Academy* Company did students of Shakespeare a disservice with their production of *Hamlet* last year. Not that they have been the only ones — to say much the unoriginal horror was the *Iron's* *King Lear* at the Plaza in 1973. And it requires no sleuth to find a common dramatic theme: simply it's the *computer*. Shakespeare lost out for the HSC examination. Our writers, how many teachers have been so for so when that high praise of the Bard is used to be empty nonsense by disinterested students on the latter examine the evidence on that issue. It is an old adage: no doubt that in many cases, that teachers have students of Shakespeare lost their hearts to the theatre does the worst? So why a revival of *Hamlet*? I heard a great quality in the flower that grows in the soil.

I will say that Edward Gekker's production is better than last year's anyway. But it is still a little and piece affair. Oliver once made a shrewd remark that could be the premise of any Orthodox production. God knows, you have to be

enormously big as Othello. It's big stuff." New Mexico Ramon is not big physically nor vocally big but he did possess a very credible Othello. James Zubizarreta's huge was noticeably improved and between them they carried the evening. It was Zubizarreta's in the first "ball" and Ramon's in the second.

In one sense, that's how *Gibber* should function: but all this production is really associated to neoliberal development character. Last Peter Dinklage asked me and even though we were surprised that the past had been well directed, Katherine Thomas's *Emilia* was fine as a study of how we're happy but that it disappears when we come in Art V. Emilia's sense of horror and outrage at Emilia's murder was completely absent. Me! that she was the only one, apart from Raman, that out of the cast reacted to the whole cold corpse as though it was just another piece of dead tissue.

[illegible]

Broderick was portrayed with a drop of that northern Vermont provincialism that Shakespeare so lovingly dissected. We had a Canon who had studied and portrayed more of the ambiguous, prove-it-the-irrefutable!, Thelma, and a fellow almost doomed in a far way that hope so victoriously castigates in the play's closing scene. The pretentious male reference to the influence of Comenius didn't hurt Shakespeare; all good and well but it's not the business of this play. (as a teaching way to learn the poem) (as though that Canon knew. Canon you know where, but Comenius enters, requires skill and precision and we better listen if not we are incapable of this. It was also a mistake that he kept addressing us the subject to the audience in it, he was certainly not there to

A third note: the schools don't sit there chatting, allowing and waiting. It can mean only letting them say their piece, playing Ontario would have done. But as leaders to the Actors' Company I'll sound the siren: stop off by going back, to the classroom. One's most-often-implications of most school parents' training productions of art exists is that they have been really taught: they are not looking for to go to universities, they even seem to be unaware of important speeches and moments. That one costs someone to a low fee theater.



Maria, Kiana, J'Polita and John
Antonio (top) in the Actors Company's
Circus

100

of the *Journal of Management Education* 31(1): 10-12.

permanent theatre and office, full-time artistic director and administrative staff and a six-week operating workshop period. I am not suggesting that we could, per se, follow an exact model, but if we could encourage the funding bodies and the theatre as a whole to use the advantages of permanence and continuity as far as the Conventer is concerned then we might have a fully staffed, equipped and subsidised operation drawing off the year round with the reading, touring and placing of new plays and with the constant presence of advice for all playwrights (the publication of a playwrights directory for example) as well as a long-term, more sophisticated and detailed annual Conventer Conference.

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Q



Donald Selzer, Donald Hoffman, and Karen Frazier, *Witnesses to the OTT's Greatest Achievements*

Would be a very good play

00000000000000000000

[illegible]

With its energy, flamboyance, and simple emotional appeal, the production is as useful for the typically laid-back QTC production as one can imagine. His approach may be crude, brash and simplistic, but John Krasinski's arrival as resident director at the QTC looks set to light new lines of communication so that all have something to say.

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Then, positioned at America's Museum together with "God Save the Queen," follows with "Songs of America," wherein the nation with its many military dominions, and finished with the air marching and so living in "Working Men's." The extent of the play, the infamous courts martial of American soldiers for war crimes during the Boer War is a throughout pastime and the historical. The difference and presentation comes about next school, attack and solvent, fully and again in the last Perry "Mass mania" Each witness has his own way of making, making making all be his, strong, strong and departing, each make an end upon or piece of business. There is a spectacular very much of machine fireworks representing the Boer attack on Fort Mifflin during the trial, and within the courtroom for arguments next with much shouting and table turning, followed by intense heated process during which significant places are exchanged and heated produced made before the next onwards become.

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the use of a computer and the use of a calculator in the classroom. The study was conducted in a middle school in the United States. The results of the study showed that the use of a computer and a calculator in the classroom was positively related. The study also found that the use of a computer and a calculator in the classroom was related to the use of a calculator in the classroom. The study was conducted in a middle school in the United States. The results of the study showed that the use of a computer and a calculator in the classroom was positively related. The study also found that the use of a computer and a calculator in the classroom was related to the use of a calculator in the classroom.

Don't Paddle Against The Wind Man: This play was first dramatized, here there are real conflicts and suspense, and as subject matter an important American myth related to a delicate and explosive incident. Harry Morgan and Peter Hinkstock were convinced by a fire at first thing repeat after being found guilty of killing four prisoners of war, the belief that they were innocent sympathizers has passed into popular American folk lore.

The British government was heavily accused internationally of committing atrocities in Southern Africa. The Boers had introduced guerrilla warfare into modern military strategy, and Kimberley replied with the concentration policies which are now famous, starved earth, concentration camps, collective punishment, and rising movements which countered the Boer attacks with guerrilla raids. When anti-racialist pressure forced the British to lead movements to share the "success", Harry Morison happened at the time to be leading a section of one such movement called the Bush-Woik Confederacy. The exposure of that and two



Edwin Hodgeman (Donny) and Leslie Dwyman (Tracy) in the STC's *American Buffalo*

American Buffalo or American bull?

AMERICAN BUFFALO

SLIST MITCHELL

American Buffalo by David Mamet. State Theatre Company of SA, Adelaide, Adelaide SA. Opened March 29, 1979. Director: David Mamet. Designer: Robert Roberts. Lighting: Noel Barnes.

Costume Designer: Elaine Hodgeman. Bobby. Colin Kelly. Walter. Gary. David. Leslie Dwyman. (Production)

David Mamet is only thirty-one, has written twenty plays and is one of America's most produced young playwrights. Comparisons with Australian David Williamson leap immediately to mind and although their approach to drama is quite different, what they do have in common is an ability to get to the guts of their own masculine milieu. The strength of their plays lies in the cultural specificity and their success proves the age-old advice given to writers of all kinds — write about what you know. *American Buffalo* is set in a junk shop in South side Chicago and Mamet spent a lot of his youth playing poker with the kind of characters that appear in the play.

The title refers to a valuable old coin which Don, owner of Don's Rattle Shop, plans to steal

(with a little help from his friends) from the guy he sold it to. It is the tension and tension in the power struggle that occurs between the characters that provides the main focus of interest. Like Williamson, Mamet is concerned with the notion of women and loans and the myths that surround such concepts. The play opens with Don dispensing wisdom and advice to the younger Dobby who is his problem for this, go far that, on the difference between friendship and business and how important it is not to get the two mixed up, if you're going to be a winner. Fletcher, who never appears on stage in the role — model — the mythical hero who has really got it all "by the balls". As the God of the play, Fletcher dominates the scene by his absence.

Don's last remark, however, is nothing compared to the cacophonous monologues delivered by Tracy whose unrepentant rantings and ravings, spew forth with propulsive momentum. *Buffalo* lies by words and stings and froths at the mouth but beneath the stream of verbal savagery is the desperation of the little man who needs it all done to convince himself and everyone else that he's on top and "that class". What gives us his guts is that other people don't treat him that way. In true black comic mode he constantly endures threats like

"The only way to teach these people is to tell them". The difference between friendship and business is clearly understood by him and even though he uses the myths of loyalty and honour to get his own way, it is he who finally reasons by violence and theft against his so-called friends.

In Australia we call such myths "mateyship" and Mamet's aim is to explore the way in which they are perpetuated and more importantly what happens to them when they conflict with "business". If there's a buck to be made or business to be done, then that's what really counts — the basic ethic being that of self interest.

So what else is new? You may well ask. This is hardly unexplored territory, nor does Mamet throw any new light upon it. Apart from the obvious comparison with Proke, our own Jack Kilford comes much closer in his one act play *Who*. What Mamet does achieve however is an accurate reflection of contemporary Chicago prices. Like Williamson, it is his use of a subculture and his perception of what they reveal about the underlying motivations and preoccupations of his characters that is the key to his strength as a playwright. If however as an Australian you feel you can't write it, then you'll be left pretty annoyed by the end of the play.

What is successfully demonstrated is the

Woman that we not only use language but the language also uses us. Through the language of America, this finally explained the search in the records of these native intellectuals as behind the never-ending flow of stress, self-justification and home-spun philosophizing within the conditioned nature of America. Significantly, the only object in the junk shop that is actually handled other than the 1912 World's Fair compact which Teach eventually snatched is described by Dore as "a thing that they stole in dead dogs keep their legs upon all the blood runs out." Teach also makes a further reference to them all being in a blood bank. Predictably, it is Bailey the innocent dumb animal whose blood flows at the end of the play. As Stan Hildford stated in "an oral Chicago you could imagine the human went under modernism?"

This is Nick Knapke's first major production for the State Theatre Company and his personal experience of America has meant that for now the attempt to achieve credibility has not resulted in phony accents and cultural clichés. The play is very stark: Mauser's entrance begins in focus on the words rather than the man verbal and each of the actors post his strategy and the intensity that the language demands. Les Kayman on Truch gave most of the laughs and seconds on whenever the right combination of

He gets out his first three words with the same delectable lisp for him. For anyone who threatens or challenges his word as law. From his entrance as a supposedly rich dark master complete with dark places to let out as a selfish, vicious bully, he maintains the necessary level of concentration and coded ambivalence.

Teddy Hodgman's portrait of the mathematician is equally competent, and his final scene with Kirby is a subtle portrayal of confusion and fantasy. *Calculus For Dummies* conveys the powerlessness of the mathematician and the vulnerability of the human mind extremely well.

Richard Roberts' act is a collection of past borrowed from various dumps outside of Adelaide and serves well as a metaphor for capitalist society. Surrounded by the discarded debris of consumerism, Mauret's characters betray each other in the name of five o'clock. Whether one doubts that it is American Ballistic or American Ball depends largely on how interested one is in the theories that Mauret puns and the particular culture in which the characters operate. I feel it is like an American who has just seen one of Williams' plays — well it's OK, but it doesn't really push me. What's the big deal?

Theatrical
gotterdamering
TALES FROM THE
VIENNA WOODS

JOHN W. BROWN

[illegible]

The glass of 1830's author John van Horne not only put being discovered by a distant blunder and one-eyed through over-indulgence in the ways of his famous Thomas contemporary, Samuel Beckett.

Shaw's *Fate From The Venus Walk* translated by Christopher Sanger. Harper, a being given as premier production in South America by Adelaide University Theatre Guild Ensemble it is not difficult to see why the play was banned by the State, as one of an economic chamberlain is a poisoning. Presents problems. First, who prefers going shopping to Richard Sanger rather than William to Adena. However, the heart pointed at German institutions as only a minor concern of Shaw's. He has a devious and currently legal in the view of the way psychology has become a central "social science" in the "scientific" ability to



Thomas Curbish, 34, from the Village Woods Photo: Tom Derricks

from the wall behind the dead by cleverly playing off the spoken word against the apparent intention. Horowitz's technique of constantly handily switching his characters out — saying one thing when they mean the opposite — produces some moments of brilliant psychology.

The surprise is what would be described as today's ready La Fontaine paragon as "Incorrupt" Mollie claims Marianne, distressed by the prospect of a forthcoming marriage to Oscar, the married husband, is seduced by the hope of the better life with the hapless Alfred. The reason is

clouded by the Depression, and Marianne is typically left hanging like a toad, accused by her family and reduced to shivering her tea for bread as a constant threat.

Unfortunately, Gould has unwittingly thrown stuff into a sort of classical goldenrodness — available talent being judged by the verbal and psychological subtleties of Horowitz's unique style of staginess.

It is symptomatic of Gould's weakness that the performance, with the exception of "Incorrupt" professional, Marie Tomsen (Julia's Grandmother), Graham Smith, like

Zankerkrieg, Clement Johnson (an excellent development of the dual-faced Marianne) and Paul Robinson is magnificent in its telling. Work does not hang the play to life until the very scene of the second act (where some, complete with black-facinated negatives, a loaded Marianne and a high-wasp-embroidered coat) in a conference on the road.

The relevancy of Horowitz's work is a premature age that promises to yield its greatest treasures from the flourishing culture of Weimar Germany which the Nazi holocaust buried ineffectively.

Out to make you laugh

THE POLICE COMMISSIONER'S GRANDMOTHER

BRUCE MCKENDRY

The Police Commissioner's Grandmother by John Douglas, (Pages 14) Adelaide: SA 51 May 1979. Director: Bill Roughly. Stage Manager: Stuart Macfie, Lighting: Anne Levy and Joe Pearson. Sound: John Kewser. Stage Props: Randolph Miles. Musical Director: Peter Bagg. Musical Score: Robert Townsend. St. Joe: Frances Kelly. John: Randy Adams. Patricia: Leanne O'Connell. Evelyn: Vicky. Production Assistant: (unavailable).

Adelaide at present is so full of alternative activity. People are accepting the varying tones in drama and realism that our company does not cater to all tastes and appetites. One positive step in the direction of first quality and the maturity group is a play written by John Douglas and directed by Bill Rough titled *The Police Commissioner's Grandmother* and performed at Theatre 42. The play depicts

Sydney everywhere really early 70s, underground, just coming 'in, drug induced, wild nights and dreamy days. On the other hand we are told of a story of two who united whilst they totally dismantle and demolish a group of layabout hipsters.

The play is funny, mostly fast moving and quick to get a young audience going. The humour lies in the language of 'beatniks', the constant paranoid situations and the underpinnings of the characters.

Douglas Vasey and Paula Carter give us two of the most dramatic grandmothers you'd ever hope to meet. Marie, great tight woman who goes judgement on the day to day acts of the younger generation. Both actresses prove to the parts a genuine commitment of apt and a thoughtful hard working approach to playing a character. Eryn Sabina who plays the kept premisses to be concerning without being, interested, as many have women on the stage tend to become. Eugene (Eugene) Rappaport plays the queen who has no regrets for his life of drugs and debauchery with control he even managed to pull off some handsome guys.

Michael Chasid was on with some song as well as just trying your eyes go into dependent, one of the best actresses on the main stream of life, character, her pace and timing are good and he comes over with an acute awareness.

The director Bill Rough has brought together a cast of talented people around a play designed to provide performance. My suspicion makes no longer, he is not to make you laugh and only that you will. The director has performed wonders on what could have been a strong tendency to go over the edge. The ensemble works well together in delivering up balanced theatre.

It is a pity to provide the context of a younger generation as a flourish of important, serious and the narrative lyrics are more mature without necessarily, but on the whole the dialogue remains entertaining. I felt the play fell down somewhat in the second act but the change in mood brings the play down to a natural base of a generation gap.

It is a credit to those involved. *The Police Commissioner's Grandmother* is a light to provide theatre during with today and today's people.

Some ritual to keep alive

PIKE'S MADNESS

BRUCE MCKENDRY

Pike's Madness was first directed by David Allen. (Pages 14) Adelaide: SA 51 May 1979. Director: Margaret Anne. Stage Manager: Robert Townsend. Musical Director: Peter Bagg. Musical Score: Robert Townsend. St. Joe: Frances Kelly. John: Randy Adams. Patricia: Leanne O'Connell. Evelyn: Vicky. Production Assistant: (unavailable).

Like the man David Allen's plays are indeed tall stories. They stand up as fiction at first, but about three inches away in Truett's Red Steel and deliver the goods as large as life. His latest "fantasy" revolves about a teacher and his equanimity into madness. A play for two *Pike's Madness* draws on the talents of John McFarlane and Christina Anderson.

The play takes place in the Brown household where Pike of the madhouse is more than a casual figure. Mrs. Brown's daughter, Jane by name, once invited her drama teacher home to tea because he apparently looked hungry. The teacher happened to be Pike, who was somehow

playing Hamlet and ended up in theatrical catatonia. Jane and Pike share some sort of relationship, for a time that is all Pike's periods arrive from the mother country. We pick the story up just after the past performance by Pike for his mad and amplifier. Of this is what the plot suggests is forming in the chaos of quick scenes, wide prophecies and costume changes. Beyond the plot of madness, you suspect, in other things. The story provides two scenes with a vehicle to portray the characters the Pike and the Brownes.

The thefts the stage of prepossession is not. From the story Margaret Pike in the form of Larry Brown delirious play-act give field for stand up comedy and situations abroad. Out the door goes Pike and in comes his grey haired, ash matted amplifier. One who took up with Pike's mother under highly suspicious circumstances when he was the initial man. Under strange situations of obsession behaviour the characters reveal amongst themselves. The bygone flesh belongs a role for his mother while Clive becomes sidetracked over his beauty.

A pathway of murder, insanity, loss and perversion take the characters to the point of

highways where the play dances in an almost home where situation of deluded autonomy while two people are engaging a game of personal adventures of the better kind. As some sort of the play's conclusion.

Both McFarlane and McAnderson put an incredible amount of energy into the play and managed to perform some wonderful bits of characterisation.

The play is a difficult one, it takes the actors as well as the audience. By way of its convoluted through the play two hours on, still tell in the final scenes all is unravelled to the simplicity of two people performing, some ritual to keep alive a sense of magic and so to be inebriatedly.

Some of the humor seems awkward and looking for a laugh. A play of the mind served up as a slapstick way. At times the audience seemed confused but were content to roll along on the play's bubble mode. David Allen's direction made for mistakes in delivery of image. The play is intended to take in the dead, by way of premonitions and a resurrection of the passed away. Pike's Madness is an expansive play which stretches the imagination, but you believe the hell, increases you realize.

One can see what she's at by having male characters played by women, she's trying to hold up for comic suggestion. Brecht fashion, the postures and attitudes of men.

But once the lines have established, nothing develops. The show trundles forward from song to joke to dance and back, to song again with little variety of tone or ideas. Only, briefly, in the rehearsal scene, does Marilyn Rodgers, playing Abby's "wife", hint at other possibilities: she captures precisely the stereotype of a woman as played by a man. But even the scene never fully explores the different levels of relationship between the husband and lover in the melodrama, and Abby and Freddie in the Club.

The weakness springs partly from the nature of the material. The jokes have to be crude and wiles to demonstrate the crudity of male attitudes — but a necessary of wiles jokes quickly become tedious.

And *The Merchant* says the wanted to use

unfamiliar songs so that we'd listen to the words. The trouble is that most of the songs are probably unfamiliar because they're instantly forgettable. (An exception is a modest ditty, spoken rather than sung by Joan Brockworth in the chocolate-coloured room, which I quote from memory.)

"If money talks, it sure don't speak to me. It don't get close enough for such familiarity."

Whatever weakness there is in the material, though, is exaggerated by the tone of the production. It's minutely pious, from the beginning, when a barbershop quartet version of the introductory song, "Come to the Club", is hummed up to the point of parody. There's a tendency throughout to put down the song from a sophisticated point of view, rather than bring out any weight they might have so that the songs aren't sung as if they ought to be memorable. Likewise, there are exceptions such as *New Street Rag*, which leads into a tap-dance in

which Evelyn Krupp joyfully tries to match, step by step. Joan Brockworth, whose dancing began the show all right.

The central glibness of the production, far from holding up male chauvinism for inspection, ends by driving a hard bit of complacency. "I missed my ball, but I think I got out of you," says Abby, as he reluctantly can catch Freddie in the groin. The audience laughs — but at what? At the schoolboy joke? Or at the fact that Freddie, who's played by a woman, has no balls? What a spelling school!

Ironically, it was a woman friend who suggested at the end of the evening, that the show might have hurt, for most of it had been played by men, camouflaging off the jokes and songs with total anonymity. We might thus, at Brecht's words, have caught a glimpse of "the horror in the heart of these".

And it could even have been directed by a woman.

Recent Brecht in Australia

CONCERNING POOR BB THE HYPOTHETICAL END OF BERT BRECHT

JACK HIBBERD

Concerning Poor BB directed and performed by Beverly Bankership, Perth Theatre, Perth, Western Australia. 1981. Directed by Michael Bradley, Melbourne. Directed by George Kolyva, Canberra. (Reviewed)

The *Hypothetical End Of Bert Brecht In Berlin* and *The First*, University production, Melbourne. Theatre University of the South Coast, U.S.A., Melbourne. The 1981 Perth Theatre has (Beverly Bankership/Director, Michael Bradley/Lighting, Philip Wright/Sound Manager, Bob Wilson/Stage Manager, Peter Brown/Assistant Director, Ian Smith/Stage Manager, Chris, Graham, Peter, Nicky, David, George, Philip, Ben, Anne, Richard, Patricia, 1981). The theatre, *Conc*, of Australian Social Science, Year of Australian Melbourn, Perth. (Reviewed)

They are only in the USA to make money. In the theatre the people are made, performing normally — they come together and despise again — and the actors are types stuck together in a package. Relationships are merely a process of sticking the package together. They do not live in the situation.

— Brecht in *Thrupp*, August 22, 1941

If Brecht noted the particular colour in might have noticed these very words, perhaps adding something about escape and imagination, the qualifications in the sense that once we feel inferior we should sit at least in the same in our inferiority and that no one should get above themselves, no making the hole too

But one much rocks the boat in Australia desire. A general comprehension of Brecht, the local application and movement of adaptation of his theory and practice, a proposition of the past, would contribute handsomely in a reading, and some prophecies of our rather personal and more round

Brecht in Australia is able to satisfy from



Beverly Bankership in *Concerning Poor BB*

being merely questioning and perceptive. The much of his ideas, the disarming ring of his social and political argumentations are rather twisted or obliterated. The comedy becomes empty, the tragedy unconvincing. These productions do not, to quote George Sorensen, present the architecture of our beliefs. The theatricality is there, a mandatory component, the unpalatability isn't.

As an antidote to the malpractice of Brecht in worldwide production, and in an intention to its own right ideologically justified by some of Brecht's own arguments, action from his high didactic phase, there has been the *Pure Approach* to people. The *Pure Approach* is

to separate most of the present theatricality, to present the ideas and polemics in a precise form, unaccompanied by character, metaphor and imposed humour. It is a purely and systematic approach to the rather polysyllabic Brecht, and one that is ultimately jaw-provoking and unyielding.

The first procedure, the *Histrionic Approach*, is widely explored by the antiquity of the cultural theory in Australia and abroad. The *Pure Approach* is understandable both as a method in the format and a product of ideological end. The first is a variety of Brecht, the second is practically a parody.

Brecht is presented yet rejected, rarely yet



Ian Freeth in rehearsal for the MTC Treasury production *The Hypocritical Artist* of Peter Brecht.

philosophical, political yet discreet, it was dramatic and simple enough. The theatre was his chosen tool. Take away the choice from Brecht and you destroy his ability to communicate, make his polyphonies and poems. You prevent the audience from actually, personally, apprehending and feeling the message. You curtail the possibility of individually selected and hence more effective, discovery. Both approaches devalue the audience. What is needed then is to bring Brecht back into the theatre, and the theatre back into Brecht.

Brecht was a true modernist in that he asserted the three mainstays of theatre and is best in the renowned company of Pirandello and Beckett. He asserted and proved that theatre had a reality of its own, and was not just a mirror of reality with which you mindlessly identified. Brecht's highly masculinised A-Lister was principally an apparatus for rendering, to the audience, news, strange, different and disturbing the standard view of reality. It was a device to demonstrate his belief that social reality was not immutable, that reality had to create itself, just as the individual created that an individual had to create itself.

The most unaccommodating example of Peter Brecht I've seen would have to be Lindsay Smith's production for the APJ of *The Machine*. A good example of Historic Brecht was the recent production by the MTC of Arthur D. Leback, the dogmatists and thearguists, were completely comfortable.

Humboldt's *Kind Kommt Kaffen*, devised by Rodney Archer, had both elements side by side. It dealt to accurately with the political process with the Marxist and The Post Approach had an appropriate representative in Rodney Archer, similarly the Historic Approach had John Gidley, one of the country's ablest actors. Singing Brecht is also a matter of acting and

contemporary. Acting Brecht is also a matter of contemporary and contemporary. You need to be more than an excellent singer and actor.

I have seen only one strikingly successful example of a fully integrated approach to Brecht in Australia — Beverly Blackmore's *Concerning Peter B.B.* aptly directed by Michael Bradley and expertly accompanied by Elizabeth Davis in the programme of songs, poems, witty epigrams, diary extracts etc. Beverly Blackmore works actor and thinker so purposefully as to create an experience of pressing dramatic and intellectual force like nerve, as the poet might decide, make Brecht a vehicle for herself, not, as the theatre might decide, make herself a vehicle for Brecht.

Blackmore's treatment of song best illustrates her command of Brecht — her separately flexible use of story, emotion, and dramatic song technique is to set out the song through song yet simultaneously make an independent attitude of mind or emotion — through reflection, face and gesture. The attitude is not necessarily fixed either a vertebrae throughout a song in response or counterpoint to the material, eg, slow moaning, now exaggeratedly slow, now faster, now full of grief or contempt. A first specimen of this dexterity is Blackmore's dramatization of Nietzsche's song from *Reinhold and Reinhold* where within the first twelve lines three distinct sets of "moodlets" are at work upon the song.

What makes this technique so dramatically pungent and effective is that we are watching a process in a moment — understanding and feeling "The living dynamics of suffering" (*George Lakoff*), we have witness to the unfixed creation of human customs, openness and defiance in the face of the stuporous and barbarous, Brecht's apparent philosophising and

not further concern us than simply identifying and having a good headless woman. His humour is of the thinking to dramatic kind.

As an interpreter of Brecht, as an actress, singer, and writer, Beverly Blackmore is above quality. She offers the Australian theatre, in public, postmodernism and students a very special example of Brechtian practice in its fullest and most modern. Drama schools, theatre management and theatre should all snap her up. The expert response to her Sydney season has last year for once put that line only in more theatrical and intellectual had about.

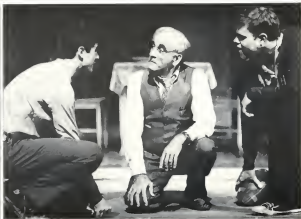
The Hypocritical Artist of Peter Brecht can only be described as unfinished. The idea of an elderly Brecht rehearsing a young actress for a role in his play Gidley while the East Berlin workers erupt in revolt on the streets is a rich one, yet suffers here from a slight dramatic mistake and a reluctance to extensively explore, in the wrong, all the paradoxical possibilities.

The least successful aspect of the whole evening, however, rests with the production. The two actors were frequently marooned by a lack of purposeful stagecraft and technical support. Consequently the performances were displaced and stilted. The director seemed extremely loathe to apply shape, pace and focus to the material and left a lot of holes and awkward jumps. I have experienced Ian Maxson at worst as an actor before but never as a director. I imagine he understands what it is like to be lost on stage with useless material.

In the wings Ian Freeth tended to overstep and mislead making it difficult to apply the appropriate tension and contrast — though as all-faithful I did not seem somewhat unmoved by a technically unnecessary microphone. Peter Cummings who looked a most feasible replica of the literary Brecht, sang as an effective designer without taking his song into, and squared what he knew and confidence he could not of stage, but in this and was more successful than most.

I have seen both Ian Freeth and Peter Cummings when comfortable, hard to sustain performances. Martin Freeth has proved his metal as a theatre composer too, despite the unfortunate names of the last. First that the MTC through Treasury Productions could still have awarded the winner a little more production expertise than was apparent. Treasury Productions could ideally be a kind of fully ordered yet reflexively anarchic La Marse within the off Broadway of the MTC. Contrarily of course the La Marse may have to be without, even off off. The point emphatically speaking of them being within and that they become central in support or make, or the usual operational means of establishing another way company. Organically, both dramatic acting and writing, needs something to purchase upon and react contrarily against. Too plain that is seen as serving the tools of destruction rather than those of creation.

Our next show June, will largely be devoted to Brecht — Ed.



Alvin Fischer, Walter Mitchell and Donnie Schulz in the National Theatre's *Death of a Salesman*

DEATH OF A SALESMAN

MARGOT LUSE

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller. The National Theatre Company, Plymouth. First opened in March 1977. Cast: Stephen Barry (Shapiro), Tony Price (Willy Loman), Warren Marshall, Linda (Margaret Kelly), Bill (David Schuder), Steve (Alan Fischer), Shirley (Linda Griffiths), Bernard (Peter Lee), Linda (Lee), Edgar Marshall (The Woman), Sally (Sally Marshall), Roger (Michael Lewis), Lucy (Shirley Marshall), Stanley (Sam Cole), Max (Philippe), Patricia (Shirley), Linda (Shirley Marshall).

(Plymouth)

It is strange seeing *Death of a Salesman* in 1979, and to wonder how much of it has become part of our mental furniture. It's not so much that it has dated, as the fact that its message is so totally taken for granted now, making the explicit statements redundant, the psychological modifications have become a little tedious, too. Half the play shows us Bill, the older son, damaged seemingly beyond repair after discovering his oldest father's lies of day. The other half shows him as the only one with the strength to accept reality and himself. It's a sort

of comparing truth. Miller got away with because of the topical and dominating trumpet blasts of his own theory about people having "the writing dream."

Walter Miller still scores it in his familiar weaving together of the two perspectives: the corrupting values of a society which makes it impossible for a man of integrity to be a "success", so that Loman's attempt to incorporate the conflicting values in the two driven leads to his destruction. You can't be a well liked man and also emerge from the business world with this full of demands.

Stephen Barry's production at the Park Playhouse relies almost entirely on the strength of its accompanying subtle performance by Walter Mitchell. What for the narrow focus is a deliberate play is difficult to determine, but Mitchell emerges as the only truly three dimensional figure, with even the man supporting actors, however lively or competent, somehow functioning on a different level.

Mitchell, almost unrecognisable with dancing

gay hair on top and a convincing American accent, gives a moving performance as the aging, slightly sadistic as the end of his father. He could have straggled off stage before and dialogue, particularly in the early scenes, is meaningful and the pleasure of watching the performance is worth much of the failure of the various account act. What makes the whole thing even more fascinating is to see how he manages to avoid becoming. All Gemetti with often superficially similar family situations. But what it, he does, so that the audience has the additional to the period, quite relevant, of course, pleasure of watching the man coming to grips with a poorly personal challenge.

Margaret Cole, as Linda, the wife, is marvellously warm and supportive, but fails to bring out the sense of quiet desperation that should be present throughout to build up to the later collapse. The two most much energy into their scenes. Alvin Fischer is at his best when young and energetic, but loses the darker notes of the gothic he is becoming, even

though he manages to suggest the idea that eventually he will emerge carrying loads of diamonds. Dennis Schultz, in full, benefits from his extensive American background which gives his performance additional strength. Edgar Menzies, as the character Uncle Ben, is too restrained for an observant viewer, denouncing a man's inner life. He should have been larger — bannier over him — one Ben.

Tony Triggs' act, evocations of childhood and childhoodness, is surrounded by a good consciousness that is more suggestive of grown water than stunted suburban, and does not seem flexible enough to accommodate scenes beyond the (comic) household. The over all effect is curious, a strong emphasis on sharply lit central characters with the minor roles floating in and out of a greenish nimbus.

There was once a failure for the "tough minded" to approve of Miller's success by way of content in the suburbs of Tennessee. William Rose has changed our perspective, and Miller's soft centre has become apparent. The opportunity to review this major play is welcome and valuable.

Artist in complete control

NOLA RAE

PETER MANN

Artistic with Daphne Oxenby, Perth WA
Alison and Oliver
21-24 Feb. Queensland Perth of Wales
1-10 March 1971 University New South
Wales, Australia

Nola Rae was what the Festival of Perth needed. It was a pleasure to be totally involved in watching the performance of a theatre artist in complete control of her medium. One is thankful that the Festival organisation brought us a performance of such high achievement in theatre movement, in local drama (it is lacking in that particular aspect). Yet Perth can name one or two people with its status (in acting and as a spokesman for the art of mime, but more of those, regrettably, has any of them performing standards here).

By comparison standing outside practitioners in the Festival was remarkable for the language brought about by local groups (and also, by one of the seating arrangements, where no one, remember, a seated, had any idea of where to begin in using movement, gesture and expression. Directors are not expected to be teachers of actors, but it seems that much is needed in actor education to raise the standards of acting in Perth, and, apparently, Australia.

The revelation of what can be achieved by movement and expression in the two Nola Rae programmes might have gone some way to beginning such education. Very likely, nothing of the kind will have happened, since most of the "wonderful players" in Perth were committed to performance, whose playing never produced more from Mrs Rae.

Of course there have been more performances in Perth before this, but the need for understanding through processing the techniques involved. It is beside the point to say that "play" do not depend on movement alone. The expression achieved by what must be called "mime", since we do not appear to have any other adequate word in English, is fundamental to all acting. Recently, books on "Body Language" have been less useful, suggesting that the matter was newly-discovered, but good acting is body language — so the extent that mime is acting is equal to its contrary, or to an unconscious picture. Nola Rae performs completely. Consequently, she can be male or woman, mouse or lion, transforming her own slight form into whatever she is intended to be. Her hands become fissionable strands — or elongated and curved — or lumpy pork chops — or any other form, according to the character she is presenting.

As the risk of seeming unadvised, I find this writing very easy from the fact that two programmes is to do justice to the artist, as such has its qualifications and some of it, so account it would be easy to overlook the program, sound-effects, make-up and lighting, as the program itself proceed so effectively, but, having noticed too many "sophisticated" performances, I draw attention to Mrs Rae's make-up that does exactly what she wants it to do and properties that work, but can so to direct from her own achievement in the action.

I wish everyone could have seen Mrs Rae, especially those aspiring to performing drama or dance on the stage.



Nola Rae

GONE WITH HARDY

COLLIN O'BRIEN

Close With Again to South Africa, Perth at the West Theatre, Perth WA (closed 10 March 1971) Queens, Colin McCall, Peter, David, Graham, Lisa, Anne (McCall), Jack, Maria, Daphne, Don, Michael, Peter, Daphne

Let me begin by declaring an interest. I worked as dramaturg on David Allen's play at the 1974 Playwrights' Conference with the author, director Terence Clarke and actors Kerry Walker, John Allen and Willie Eason. I feel we got further with the play in that fortnight of workshop than the production in the Hole in the Wall lasted, so comparisons are inevitable.

The play deals with the business post relationship between a situation Stan Laurel and an Australian movieville entrepreneur, in the play called Kate Laurel, presumably to avoid a libel suit. The play is built on a series of scenes many of which include or themselves border on comedy routines. I found that a subtle device, as the flow of the play was the sort of person who would use just such a device in real life as a means of distancing people, of avoiding awkward involvement. The play is tied together by a third character, a drunken old Scottish and called Jack McTavish, a clown at present. Embodied in Stan's Playwrights Anthony.

As I remember, Terry Clarke was a little unhappy with the second half, but I'm not sure that the problem which has gone on through both the MTC production by Ray Lawler and the Nimrod one has helped it all that much. Some of the changes seem to have been motivated by fear of the aforementioned possibility of libel (the play is based on real events but even those put in for theatrical effectiveness do not seem to me to be much of an improvement).

The tendency both in Perth has been to blame the script for the play's failure, but I'm inclined to think it rather less with the way things are done. It seems to me that an accumulation of fairly provincial things from working out a major error, so I'd better describe.

I remember Kerry Walker managing with Kate, a probably Australian measure of innocence and vulgarity in such expressions as "Kiss your back, mate!" and even "Pussy with a stick up his bum." Excellent actors though Kerry McCall is, and much as I don't wish to put down the culture which bred both Anne McCallum and myself, the innocent vulgarity seemed foreign to Kerry's English origins.

I was a little unhappy, too, with Michael O'Brien's approach to Jack. I remember Willie Eason finding a deeper realism in Jack, consciousness of Spike Milligan's McCool. One could imagine him in a more than a little of it, very much the half drunken, drinking, Irish Marston Jack was more aware and bewilderment, though a difficult performance.

But the most source of worry by far was Michael Philip's Stan, a peculiarly remote and detached performance. John Allen whose conception I thought excellent, managed to be



Michael Frost (Left), Brian O'Connell (Center) and Jenny McNeil (Right) in *The Holy Grail with Harry*

Seem to combine a professional reluctance with a jubilation which is in a sense of keeping people at a distance, the sort of lubrication which is a shield rather than a means of human contact. But one still felt some sympathy for the three whereas, say, the audience, never felt for Mr Price's at all the while was exasperated.

The final aspect of the production I was

unhappy about was that the producers did not seem so bold enough, they seemed too cautious and parsimonious. This may have been the right nerves, but I felt that it was at the heart of the director, so that a play which should have had fire and passion appeared "inspired" and harried.

I was sorry that the evening didn't work for a number of reasons: it was Colin McColl's first

production as Director of the theatre, and he will be relieved if there is not too far the play; but the effect we have to suspend judgement on Mr McColl's abilities as a director, hoping that his next effort will reassure us. It is truly a shame that his first play for the Holy Grail could not have been a success both artistically and at the box office.

French superiority complex

THEATRE DE PAPIER

MARGARET MASLEN

It is extraordinarily difficult to review a theatrical performance that is best described in one word — "magical".

Yes Joly's *Theatre de Papier* is just that. It is magical in the same way that Clio Lami's singing is, or the gut-punch music of Georges Zambic, or the Black Theatre of Prague. And just as one cannot describe for others the sensation of listening to Lami or Zambic, except by sharing together a lot of totally subjective judgments, one cannot describe the extent of the pleasure that is Joly's constant theatre.

The programme seems certainly to set very loosely preparing the audience for the delight in music. They are, I suspect, faithfully translated from the French of M Joly himself, since they are so depressing in tone. (M Joly introduced each sketch so quietly as to be inaudible in Row C) of the Regal Theatre in Perth. Indeed an introduction was unnecessary since the musicians speak so eloquently for themselves.)

The first note makes itself. "To begin with, here is a short sketch called, *Incognito*. You may recognise something familiar about it." Nothing more? Or — it's not told in one night, appropriately put it. What follows is a superb

execution of the sketch mentioned — and, also, unable to sleep again.

Later we had *Chimborazo* & *Panama*, described thus: "Here is a fantasy where far and I hope, you as well, all the umbrellas and parasols become father and mother, a young girl, her seducer some young ladies who muddle with things that do not concern them and above all, two policemen afraid of chasing criminals."

What followed compared up a long-term family outing in the Tuileries, crossed with concepts from the Keystone Cops (or were they Kops?), and a Victorian melodrama — and all done with eight hands, turned umbrellas for the males, and waving, lightly coloured open parasols for the females.

The last sketch *Mardi* was quite out of the ordinary. The four puppets made out of their eight white-gloved hands floating sea-things, boats, and, finally, fireworks. This was undoubtedly the most original offering, and the most abstract.

There were disappointments, though. Photography was largely derivative — Philippe Carry or the Black Theatre did a similar sketch with a paper accordion representing an old-fashioned camera, and *Paper Puppets* was concerned in *Waltz* drama.

Parties, the performance was very brief — given the price of the tickets, and, unfortunately, it was not the children in the house.

The "plot" for the most part was extremely sophisticated, and it was notable that in the

second half, laughs were forced, or non-existent. It seemed to me that the audience had come, as I had, to see "their" things, like the Garry sketch that kept being at yellow landscapes, or beautiful things like the Black Theatre's phosphorescent flowers and crystalline shapes. Indeed we were possessed with super French subtlety of an order quite beyond the grasp of the many children in the audience, and, I believe, of many of the adults too. It may be that the company has performed the sketches so often that their timing has become too "thick", and they no longer wait long enough to establish the characteristic situation. Or, it may be after all, that the French are right in their estimation of themselves — that they truly represent "a civilization".

Two images juxtaposed themselves on my mind as the way home from the performance. The one was a mirror. The other of my first encounter with a Persian child in was in the dining car of a train somewhere between Bordeaux and Paris. Papa, Maman, and I found a just about good press and apparently dressed in a short-pant suit had graciously permitted me to share their table. I was twenty three, not only in Kraft shoes and a mail shirt as Christmas, and topped with University Fuzilli.

Childs selected his own wine — to suit the occasion, of course, and he actually knew the names of all the cheeses on the after-dinner plate.

Something should be done about the French superiority complex!

1979 is seeing major strides being made in regional theatre — though often going unnoticed, it is the next major step in our theatrical development.

Booming in the Backblocks

— Regional Theatre Revisited.

A special report compiled by Prudence Anderson, introduced by Robert Page

Theatre for most people is associated with the way of life of major cities. Yet though urbanisation continues a reaction has set in. More and more we are under way to take the arts back to the regions and the country.

Groups are springing up from Darwin to Geelong. From Wedgetown to the nearest suburbs of Sydney. They are trying to re-establish a link with grassroots, to involve the local community. Locals are being made to realise that to enhance their quality of life, they need the arts more than the city is served by it.

There are all kinds of indications that regional professional companies are both needed and wanted. At the top end is Newcastle, the country's largest inland city, the Hunter Valley Theatre Company most closely approximates a capital theatre in Sydney's moneyed suburbs. At the same time the U-which moved out of the city centre last month and based in 1978 to play for area around Newcastle and Parramatta. Their community involvement, artistic director Doreen Warburton reports that all members live in the suburbs they serve is much more extensive than the Newcastle counterparts.

In Nagge the Riverside Theatrical Company, again proved how vital is community involvement. After first looking to popular plays their greatest hits were and are locally devised/directed.

In Victoria graduate students from the College of the Arts created two major companies this year, WEST, in Essendon, and the Murray River Performing Group in Albury-Wodonga. Both groups do largely preparatory work with the respective communities before a pioneering the funding bodies. They attempted to establish grass roots awareness and involvement in the early stages to avoid any suggestion of imposition of an alien artistic identity.

They look all set to be adventurous without being over-ambitious in trying to attract rural audiences! Theatre audiences? They will go on to where the people congregate, hopefully expressing through drama the spirit and mood of their regions.

Regional theatre is poised for a major stride forward. But unfortunately it comes at a time when the federal purse is not getting any bigger. In December 1978 the Theatre Board released a policy document which offers up to a dollar for dollar subsidy to new theatre groups, whereas in the past they have had to vie with all comers for project grants. The federal body is to decrease its

expenditure by ten per cent each year with a cut of all funding after five years.

The States see the same as one outstripping them towards greater centralisation each year. Nor can they support operators on such a limited life expectancy. The regions they believe, should get equal returns culturally for their federal taxes.

Mining spent an inordinate share this year in the high double digits of a million — but money alone cannot of course ensure success. Many mining provinces are almost literally in the field, keeping ahead with the pace of making theatre belong to the locality in which it functions.

These challenges collectively is to bring all the best major developments in Australian theatre. *Reported on in detail from north and south from The National Times, 12/10/1978.*

The Darwin Theatre Group (Northern Territory)

The Darwin Theatre Group has survived as an initiative in preparation for over twenty years (it now operates in Darwin's Mart, on a theatre which has a similar open stage to The Space in Melbourne). The theatre has been subsidised as a National Trust building and is now owned by the group.

Negotiations are underway with the Northern Territory Government to form the basis of a professional core, using the resources already available at Darwin's Mart. Members of the Territory's only fully professional resource, the TIE team, sometimes join the DTG in performance and auditions are open to the public. DTG

is involved in a number of community projects as well as performance and is making itself available for use in its experimental resources.

The Darwin Theatre Group employs one professional Artists director, Robert Kinsler.

Grants 1979:

Theatre Board of the	
Applied to Council	\$14,000.00
Terrestrial Government	\$ 5,000.00

Mill Community Theatre Group (Vic)

Mill Community Theatre Group, an activity of Deakin University, works out of an old workshop, and based by Deakin University for use as a theatre. The company operates on various levels with ongoing community projects, workshops for adults and children as well as organising a series of workshops at the Core Music Resource Centre.

The Mill employs seven professionals. Director, James McCaughey; Theatre Manager, Community Liaison and Actor, Robin Horwood; Actor/Writer, William Henderson; Actor, Ben Condon; Art, Scott, Barbara Clowdike, Meredith Rogers.

Grants 1979:

Theatre Board of the Australia	
Council	\$10,000.00
Community Arts Board of the Australia	
Council	\$ 2,000.00

The Company also receives grants from Myra Foundation, Peter Foundation, South Western Council, Shire of Cress, Geelong Hort. Company.



Darwin Theatre Group's production of *March: A Book of Nothings*

Regional Theatre

Hunter Valley Theatre Company (NSW)

The Hunter Valley Theatre Company was formed in early 1976 to service Newcastle and The Hunter Valley Region. Because of its difficult financial position the company is concentrating on performances at the Playhouse Theatre and is unable to tour schools and country areas or take part in other community projects.

HVTC employs four professionals who are on contract till 30 June, 1979. The future of the Hunter Valley Theatre Company is undecided.

Artistic director: Ross McGregor (Production Manager, Eric Mackay-Snellings (Stage Manager, Alan Gossaway, Asst. Stage Manager, Michael Sutton.

Admission and contact for specific performance.

Grants 1979

NSW Cultural Deposits \$40,000.00

Hunter Valley Theatre Company \$20,000.00

NSW TV 5,000.00

Overseas from 1979 15,000.00

See Spotlight on the Civic Playhouse

Murray River Performing Group (NSW/Vic)

The Murray River Performing Group is Albany/Wodonga's first full-time community theatre. Headquarters and rehearsal space are located in Albany. The group does not have its own theatre but doesn't use that as a rationale.



Hunter Valley Theatre Company's production of *My Darling Clementine* by John G'Donoughue. Photo: Tony Rogers-Cox

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY *presents*

10th May...

18th May...

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UNDER MILK WOOD

(by Dylan Thomas)

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factor. The performers strive to build on non-national theatre audiences and believe this has a motivating effect on many in the public. They attempt to develop the community's support and awareness of the theatre by involving the people in productions from the very early stages.

The Murray River Performing Group is particularly active in working with the support of parents concerned and has made a wide-scale commitment to consistently theatre projects. A feature of their work is Kids' Circus, a production involving 140 children from regional schools who will perform with the Murray River Performing Group in a circus tent 15/19 May.

The MRPG employs nine professionals: Director Robert Penner, Writer in Residence Lloyd Suter, Administrative Member Ross Chatterton, Zoe Thomas, Actors Mark Niswick, Julia Tapscott, Tina Spinks, Les Matthews, Les Connolly.

Grants 1979
NSW Cultural Division 10,000.00
Ministry of the Arts 15,000.00
Murray Foundation 2,000.00

The Q Theatre (NSW)

The Q Theatre was established at Sydney at Circular Quay seventeen years ago. After deciding to deepen their commitment to regional theatre the group moved out to the western suburbs of Sydney in 1977. Their base theatre, the old Railway Institute building is provided for them by the Federal Council Where on tour they play at Bathurst Town Hall and the



Leslie Loney, Les Matthews and Julia Tapscott from the Murray River Performing Group. Courtesy Robert Penner, MRPG.

Murray Foundation of Performing Arts

The Q has enrolled over 140 students in their theatre workshops, performs at schools regularly and are heavily involved in other community programmes from their regular productions.

The Q employs sixteen professionals who are contracted on a yearly basis: Artistic Director, Doreen Warburton, Administrator, Julia M. Bickley, Director and Head of Design, Arthur Backs, Youth Director and Dramaturg, Max Hillard, Director of Q workshops, Richard Brooks, Development Officer, Kevin Jackson, Actors, Helen Mathon, Bill Coss, Gae Anderson, Alan Bell, Alexander Hay, Judy Davis, Stage Management, Sherry Fife, Trevor Connell, Lenny Higgins, Leona Sharp.

Grants 1979

Federal Government 100,000.00
State Government 10,000.00

Riverina Tracking Company (NSW)

The Riverina Tracking Company was formed over two years ago by its first director, Terry O'Connell. During 1978 the group was funded by Federal and State Governments and became officially known as the Theatrical Tracking Company.

The group's theatre is in the southern campus of the Riverina College of Advanced Education and students work closely with the College during production seasons. The Tracking Company serves a region with under 150 miles and hopes to tour a lot more this year. Unfortunately the company can only afford to tour small and shows but country towns will be able to book productions up to one month after the play finishes its season at the College campus.

The Riverina Tracking Company employs seven professionals: Director Doreen Jackson, Administrator Brian Stramelli, Writer in Residence Sandy McCutcheon, Actors Steven Ames, Rick Harley, Peter Gray, Maana Higgs.

Grants 1979

Assistance Council 57,000.00
Cultural Advancing Council 21,000.00
Grant from the Literature Board which provides the group with its Writer in Residence.

In order to survive The Riverina Tracking Company must make up from their activities \$28,000.00 per annum.

Theatre of Youth and Education in the Riverina (NSW)

RIF TYER died at the end of 1978 when its grant was not renewed. After awaiting the group 20,000 dollars in 1979 the Federal Government refused the submission to the State funding body who had no money to enable TYER's continuation.

Tartanbell Theatre Company (W.A.) Bridgetown.

It is not a permanent company and exists together only for specific productions. It was established three years ago with a grant from the Australia Council and toured the eastern states as well as related areas in Western Australia.

In 1979 Co-directors Sam Grant and Sheila Hunt moved to Bridgetown. Last year Tartanbell re-formed to make two separate school tours in the region.

This is the first time Western Australia has come close to having a professional regional theatre company.

Townsville Civic Centre (Qld)

At the moment Queensland does not have a single regional theatre company. Till now people in regional areas have been served by productions toured by the Queensland State Theatre Company and TIE groups.

Townsville may be the first city in the north to establish a professional theatre group. The move is coming from the commencement of the newly built Townsville Theatre. Townsville City Council has engaged director, Rick Nelson to stage amateur productions which sometimes use visiting professional actors.

Applications for grants have already been prepared and now the executive depends on decisions between funding bodies and the availability of facilities.

Travelling Playhouse (NSW)

The Travelling Playhouse Company works from a theatre on the campus of the University of New England. Its major objectives are to provide community theatre and theatre in education. While on tour, the company also



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How Aust. Theatre went an international
contest?

(Continued from page 8)
consequence and occasionally sent a delegate to
competit, as well as starting its report. World
Premises to Paris. When Maria Thorsch was
appointed Honorary Secretary in 1970 she
visited seven European centres and reported on
their structure and operation to the then
Australian Council for the Arts, requesting a
small grant to operate on a part time basis at the

University of New South Wales. With financial
and increasing support from the Australian
Council, resources gradually expanded and in
1974 the Centre moved to its own room at the
Australian Chamberlain Theatre Trust. Over the
years the Honorary Secretary has been assisted by
a series of part time official secretaries.

*Robert Quinlan a President of the Australian
ITI Centre. Empower to the Hon. Sir Maria
Thorsch

Civic Playhouse: Can bricks ensure performance?

Continued from page 11

conditioning — which is estimated to cost about
\$15,000.

Lustrous and the Civic Playhouse is a
delightful little theatre. Its first floor auditorium
reaches into the roof, supported by concrete
pillars. It has been built without major structural
alterations and the architectural design of the
Westgate has stayed intact. The 187 seat
auditorium is a novel arrangement around a
front stage with raked balconies on either side.
The small stage is, according to architect Brian
Selwyn, flexible enough to accommodate
virtually any set design as long as a director is
not contemplating grand opera. But there are no
dressing facilities and only very limited access. The
sets have to be built on location and cannot be
changed in performance.

There is wing space on either side of the stage
and storage space underneath. The dressing
rooms, administration offices and props room
legitimately unconsciously hug a line on the left of the
stage and are spacious and sunny. The bench-
style seats are brown-velveted with white
cushion in the auditorium. The Mezzodrop
theatre is given a pointed, plush finish with
light red trimmings, dark blue carpet and
abundant pillars.

The artistic director Ross McGregor will
follow what is sure to be a highly successful
season of *Calculus* with *The Miracle Worker*. Let
us hope it will prove a prophetic choice.



International Year
of the Child 1979

Children's Theatre: A series to mark The International Year of the Child.

MAGPIE is the theatre-in-education team of the State Theatre Company. In 1978 it hit the headlines...

JOHN LONIE

TIE: Education & Community

Magpie is the theatre-in-education team of the State Theatre Company of South Australia and comprises the director, Malcolm Moore, eight actors — four women and four men — a secretary, a researcher/writer and stage manager. Since its formation at the beginning of 1977 under Roger Champness, the team has pioneered many of the major developments in theatre for young people in South Australia. At the beginning of our third year of operations, we have been casting a critical eye back over our past work as a (great) moment's reflection of our role in South Australia.

Generally, the director of *Magpie's* work has been toward school age children with performances usually taking place within schools themselves. However, during the biennial Adelaide Festival of Arts and the 'Come Out Festival', the young people arts festival in South Australia, *Magpie* has also presented work on the Playhouse stage. The Festival of Arts' productions, while taking up a small amount of any performance year, have been important in having theatre for young people accepted in Adelaide as an integral part of Australian theatre rather than being a mere involvement in future 'turn on time' for the major company.

Beginning with the Festival of Arts production of Anne Harvey's *Black Mirror* and the *Bulwer*, *Magpie* mounted seven ten productions during 1979. Some contained themes common to any capitalist society like Australia, although critical, certainly, was local. Among these was *Damon's Journey* which was designed to help very disadvantaged children from non English speaking families with their English. *Hi-tech*, a participatory play for middle year high school students, was concerned with the problems of survival of a 'free press' in the world of media monopolies. *Strike at the Port*, probably our most celebrated production of the year because of the publicity gained from attacks made on it by some local conservative politicians, was about the 1928 lockout of Port Adelaide waterfront workers and made analogies with the current unemployment situation and the role of trade unions.

During September of last year, *Magpie* went on its second country tour of the year, taking

Billy Gilligan's Good Captain's Run to six people in the industry and mining villages of outback South Australia. This production and the tour itself have been central to the current reconsideration of our collective conception of theatre-in-education.

The tour was undertaken with the support of the Remote and Isolated Children's Bureau, based at Port Augusta and the assistance of the Australian National Railway, the Education Department, the Arts Council of SA and the Australia Council. The *Billy Gilligan* De was an important challenge for us because we knew that its form and content would be dictated entirely by its intended audience and that that audience would be, in every case, a quite coherent community made up of young and old. And, given that so many of these communities lack television and even radio, that they lack facilities which city folk take for granted, we had decided to mount a production which was out of the ordinary, both for them and for us. We decided to draw on our own life and to incorporate features not wanted in our script. Working with *Magpie* on the tour, were John and Sue Fox and it was under their influence

that we were able to build up celebratory images and symbols to articulate the familiar and the out of familiar aspects of outback life.

Finally, the *Billy Gilligan* De was thematically concerned with harmony and disharmony between people and their physical environment. The show was divided into three parts, the first involving school children, the second involving the more symbolic aspects of the piece, the third being a celebratory cabaret on the local pub or hall. For wheels and sculptures were made in the company workshop and these were used in the second part to provide the spectacle and the symbolic depth in the presentation.

Working with and involving all the members of a small community was indeed, a novel experience for *Magpie*, one which created the setting and the opportunity further to consider our future direction. We had a lovely experience doing a community show with *Strike at the Port* in as much as a school's production was presented to an audience of waterfront workers and their friends. The show worked for both sorts of audiences although it had not originally been intended as a community play.

Theatre-in-education is usually taken to mean



Marlene Gilligan and team.

Children's Theatre

dramatic presentations in school students which are first, unexamined and second, uninteresting. Certainly Magpie means as committed as ever to 'messy' presentations which we have sought to mount in as entertaining a way as possible. The heavy involvement in time and skills which the company has put into music, which was such a vital element in the *Billy Colgan* Co has been important in strengthening the entertainment aspect of our work.

Theatre-education as we have experienced it, need not necessarily be confined only to school performances for students for the very simple and obvious reason that education itself is not the sole prerogative of the school system. Education involves the quest for critical understanding and the ability to challenge. It is as relevant to learners in Harbord and railway workmen in Cook as it is to students at Stuart Street Primary School. Community performances of our work have enabled us to put into practice the idea that it is really theatre-education as the community.

NOTES

1. Roger Chapman is on leave for eighteen months, directing the Tyroneer Theatre in England.
2. See Nick Wright in *Theatre Australia*, January, 1979.
3. Magpie people are Malcolm Moore (director), Marilyn Allen, Peter Fargo (Designers), Val Lewkowicz, Glenda Lissack, Patrick Mitchell, Gene Moore, Jerry Phillips, John Lane, Chris Mear and Secretary Clatworthy.



Lilly and Jack, *Spent in Billy Colgan's Co.*

Comment

Continued from page 2

write that some theatre companies fail that because they themselves offer a playwright service and new readings and workshops of new plays, the CoEtrix is an unnecessary duplication. But the ANPC's work is an adjunct to that of the companies: while they do as much script reading as they can, they rarely have the facility to carry this out as they would like, and the ANPC can bear some of the responsibility. Its workshops are obviously not in competition with company readings — few can offer the same two solid weeks of workshops with top actors and directors. Even in several additional playwrighting competitions this year have increased, rather than decreased, interest in the Playwrights' Conference, so its work is strengthening its theatre support.

With a view to giving a broader theoretical context, we start this month publishing consistent monthly coverage of British Theatre (Australia should follow shortly). We are very pleased to have Irving Wardle, outside critic of *The Times* writing this column for us.

Q & Q

Continued from page 4

as managers also, it's a matter of numbers. I don't believe that you can successfully manage ten hundred people, but you can represent them. There is a great difference. It is my intention not only to actively seek out work for my clients, but also to promote, guide, behind and encourage them, whether they are well established or just starting out. With that amount of work to do on such short I see no possibility of ever having an active list of more than a dozen people — as long as I am working on my own.

I intend to continue doing publicity and public relations at the Music Hall whilst working on my new venture. Both jobs being vitally inter-compatible. My honours, John Laide of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, is giving me a great deal of moral support. With this, a lot of hard work plus the proverbial bit of luck, I have no doubts that I can offer the right people a management service that they previously have not been able to find."



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Sutherland in Melbourne; Rhinegold in Sydney; Fledermaus in SA.



The return of Joan Sutherland to the staged sports scene in Melbourne after a hiatus of fourteen years, would surely have to be regarded as Australia's operatic event of the month for March 1978, were it not for the concert performance of Wagner's *The Rheingold* in Sydney a few days later.

Either of these events would have been enough to make my operative month that both came within together was truly remarkable.

The Sutherland *Forrest* in Melbourne would have been a noteworthy event were it not for the loss of an artistic triumph that it was in fact, for there is no doubt Sydney has been guilty of monopolising Dame Joan's presence in the years since the opening of the Opera House. Indeed, Australia's stage company operates event of the year will probably prove to be the fact that Dame Joan is appearing in all four seasons standard capital cities in a total of five different roles — equalling in variety for 1955 since with the Sutherland Williamson touring company.

But I also found Sutherland's *Viola* a thoroughly enjoyable experience in itself, quite daunting when it seemed to be — in particular, of course, in the point that she concludes Act I — but, even more optimal in the effective realisation of *Viola* on stage, quite heart warming and allowing it to capture warmth, which is what *Viola* is mostly all about.

It is impossible to forget just a little comparison between Sutherland's *Viola* and that of Renée Kanaeva, who created the role as the Copley production in Sydney last year. I found *Dr Kanaeva's Viola* the most convincing performance, historically, I have yet seen from her, and — almost needless to say — it was vocally disarming in its proficiency and its total perfection as well. Yet *Dr Kanaeva's* stage previously failed even to the only a perceptible degree of the warmth and womanliness that is required of the ideal *Viola*.

Archconnoisseur however is clearly part of *Viola*'s facade, coupled with a certain outer strength — the is, after all a woman of my virtue. But what finally makes *Viola* great is that she is warm and human: a tender hearted woman driven to duty for true love under duress. She is a victim of Victorian morality as well as her fatal disease, and this fact came across more poignantly in Sutherland's *Forrest* than a *Dr Kanaeva's*, great as that was in its own context.

Sutherland the vocal acrobat is undeniably beginning to show her age, if only in the odd fleeting bit of lost agility and the occasional sign of strain at the very top of her range. But at the same time Sutherland the singing actress and

the vocal artist are gaining stature by leaps and bounds.

It is in a way, in artistic terms, that so few of the such commenters could be close enough, as the overtones context of the *Palais Theatre*. St Kilda to experience the full impact of her immense stage personality. It was the first time I had ever heard Sutherland sing (it seems that I had been misled to regard her as a voice of great human, and not superhuman, proportions, and it was myself as thoroughly an enjoyable experience as I have ever had in the opera).

The Elizabethan Melbourne Orchestra played much better than I have ever heard it before musically, it was deprived of some of its original lustre by being wrongly identified in the printed programme as its Sydney counterpart, and both Robert Almond (Kerns) great and Anne Aspin (Alfred) were in top form. Aspin, in particular, continues to improve noticeably almost month by month. He still has plenty of punch and the old age of status at the top of his range, but the passages of clear brain lyrics seem more frequently and are longer duration just about every time. I encounter him on stage. At the same time, he seems to be coming for less wooden. He gives every sign of reaching the peak of his career in the very near future, and a very excellent peak it seems certain to be.

The Melbourne *Proviola* was very close to a direct loss in the overall excellent status of the month, to the low concert performance in Sydney of the first of Wagner's Ring opera's, *The Rheingold*. There were few vocal disappointments, and a couple of marvellous vocal surprises, but the basic opera quality as a whole of performance, and despite the might well have been overshadowed by the music.

Unfortunately, this was not the case, and there were a good many moments when music vied in the full dramatic realisation of the poem was thwarted or simply not there. To some extent this was the fault of Mark Elder as conductor, though his reading of the score was slow — very slow — sometimes dragging. It was unconsciously rooted at the expense of dramatic impact as in the totally dramatic moment dramatically, when Wotan questions whether to part with the Ring, and with it the power to rule the world, at return for the freedom of Fricka. The shocking aspect of pure violence, in the wake of there is no hint of otherwise continuous music, is most brilliantly at the point by Wagner, and no doubt Elder will quickly incorporate such nuances into his future performances as he gains confidence in his mastery of the complexities of *The Ring*. There was also some orchestral lapses. I had not anticipated from as generally as excellent body of musicians as the Sydney Symphony

Orchestra, though it would be charitable to dwell on such things as what was by and large a superb all round effort.

There were no weak links among the soloists, and there were some extremely strong ones — in particular, Robert Gault absolutely marvellous. Roger and Donald Sharpe's full voiced and subtle. Wotan through a was just a little and noticeably subtle, perhaps, to compensate fully the character, which has more than its fair share of human features despite the godlike features of much of Wotan's music.

The vocal surprises of the evening, with no exception to the rest of the soloists all of which were well and some stunningly, were Neville Wilton's Donner and Bruce Martin's Frodo. Wilton has been more or less snowed out in the depths of the Australian Opera chorus for some time, following some impressive solo roles in Queensland a few years back — I remember his Donner in *Die Meistersinger* and an *Unlabeled* *Requiem* in particular. I had not encountered Martin before. Both sang with great power and extreme and beauty of tone, in the *Rheingold*, in particular Martin who, as Frodo, was of course much more central to the action than Wilton. Ragnald then also made some superb roles in Frick, as did Ned Warren-Smith as Fafner.

Raymond Myns Alberich and Gregory Dempsey's Wotan both lacked a measure of the vocal drama of the dwarf. Maestra Diana Frodo was lively to listen to, but perhaps a bit short at the kind of wildly nervous and suggesting that it is so vital to her place in the drama. Elizabeth Forrest was a suitably phoney Fricka, and finally, and finally, finally convincing as



Harriet Bagg, Grant Jackson, Joan Sutherland and Graham Evans in the *ADG's* *Die Walküre* Photo: Kenneth Goss.

drastically that her *placé* was so desperate it was worth getting with the power to ruin the world to save her.

But here, if by Laura Elms, just about to sing a show-stopper in a relatively minor part such as Erda the earth goddess, appearing again at the rear of the orchestra, well distanced from the other unknown, and singing as always with a marvellous abundance of untroubled tone, she achieved all the dramatic impact possible within the confines of her head-stings and the concert context.

There was a good deal of singing and dancing in this concert performance, with most of the scenes — all but Erda, in fact — sung up to and from the narrow belt of plywood between orchestra and audience during the orchestral interludes between scenes and this was mostly better than having everyone taking the house or standing between houses throughout. Nevertheless, any concert performance of an opera must inevitably run a bit several best (if even a mediocre performer fully engaged, and it is desirable to be hoped the Australian Opera finally gets very shortly out of the conventional political-economic maze that has frustrated its place in the theatre for several years).

State Opera's *Flinderman*, which reintroduced the reinvented Opera Theatre, Adelaide, early in March with scenes of champagne both on stage and off, was the most thoroughly successful production I have yet seen from that most mischievously unbalanced of all Australia's regional companies. It featured a very strong cast led by Jane Brostoff as Rowlands supported by a superbly balanced team of co-principals in which there was no weak link, equally important, Adrian Slack's direction was for once totally adequate and Merv Fyfe's set was able to cast more than acceptable sounds out of his orchestra.

One must confess, if only in passing, on the recent 54 minutes flourish for the theatre itself as it effected the parties for production, and record that there were a few decidedly weird scenic effects, at least in the front row of the dress circle. Hopefully these can be corrected without great further expense, and there is no doubt that the overall atmosphere of the place has been improved significantly, and that is now a much more original place for performance and audience alike.



Servin Hain and Jane Brostoff in the State Opera's *Flinderman*.

The particular strength of this *Flinderman*, it seems to me, is that its characters, however they were conceived, and most were superb, the singing notwithstanding, but absolutely effective. *Flinderman* is an opera, and was played to one, but its considerable musical merit was not neglected in any sense.

Probably, the individual the performer was Jane Brostoff who was absolutely in her element as Rowlands — singing quite beautifully, and coping very well indeed even with the considerable technical demands of so much elaborate scenery. Her physical stance is something of an ideal, heading what she plays the sophisticated society lady, yet she is such an accomplished old pro at the spoken dialogue department, and such an experienced actress, that one cannot honestly fault her such river-rat-like all through an evening at the opera. Her task as *Flinderman*, though was a good deal more formidable in the dramatic continuity department than in most operas due to the diffusion of the central act, comparable but where almost everyone of consequence to the plot is present in disguise and the whole point of the exercise is that they must not recognise each other.

The "disguise" in this particular *Flinderman* were the only significant lapse in Tom Longwood's design: they were awful, and arrested continuity well beyond the willing suspension of disbelief. One might have thought they were intended to be a send-up of megamade hall dramas, except that the attempt of send-up in the rest of the design for this production was totally absent, and anyhow the whole plot depends on a very considerable extent on the credibility of the megamade stuff so its comic potential was exploited.

There was also the additional problem of the switch of garments between Rowlands and her chamber maid, Adele, played in Adelaide mainly by Carolyn Vaughan who is as tall and slim as Brostoff is short and well proportioned. Double full marks go to Brostoff for her dexterity delivery of the punch-line when informed that the female wearing one of her gowns was her own chamber maid "I never would have believed it. Quite rightly! It brought the house down."

Less idiosyncrasy in a very problematical Act II was the crazy way in which Dr Pollock, half way through the party in Osterley's, hunched off into an explicit revelation of the subterfuge and intrigues he was engaged in to effect revenge on Karamazov for the last incident from which the name of the opera is derived. I have an ancient recording from the Metropolitan Opera, New York, on which this particular speech appears as a prototype of explanation in that context it makes perfect sense, in the middle of Act II of the drama itself it is quite out of place.

The above quibbles apart (though this was a *Flinderman* of real excellence — above all, for its unifying framework. That I have at the moment only Brostoff and Vaughan should



Keith Lewis (Paler) in VO's *The Pearl Fishers*. Photo: Basser/Gates

not to labour any reflection on the rest. Both the leading women of the night, Servin Hain (Karamazov) and Theresa Edwards (Adele) were excellent — the much less score assigned by Edwards being as logically acceptable as Adele's as I had found it a few weeks earlier in an otherwise much less successful Sydney production, and thus providing a satisfying picture of the talents which will no doubt be a good deal more fully deployed when he returns to Adelaide later in the year to play *Moscow's Winter*.

Roger Howell was a thoroughly delicious Dr Pollock and John Wood a delicious Frank, assisted by a delightfully unexpected kind of performance from Tony Roberts as his even more delicious officer French.

Only two moments can be made of the two other events of the month — first, the *The Pearl Fishers* as presented by the Victoria State Opera, and the Australian Opera *La Bohème* which debuted with the Tasmanian national theme during March at the Palace Theatre, Melbourne.

Daughter John Truscott passed himself into a corner very early in the piece when concerning the basic commitment for his sets for *The Pearl Fishers* that though the thought was to have water in the landscape area complemented by shimmering water in the background, the result was to create unfortunately the limited performing area of the Princess Theatre and give me in some fundamental doubt about the geography of the stage action. Were we on a promenade or an avenue, by mistake, or simply on a thoroughly well contained narrow strip of land in London?

The idea of having a giant, massive house in the stage up to its time was brilliant but the outcome — notwithstanding its much professed authenticity — appeared less authentic than that for last year's *Quintessence* production. In stagecraft, as in many other areas of human endeavour, appearance is for most

(Continued on page 12)

AB first programme - triple bill shrugged off; highlights that were highlights

A lot of people had put a lot of store by the Australian Ballet's first programme offering in Sydney this year, most specifically the world premiere of Barry Minto's *Prokofiev*.

Hopes were high because people remembered the London Festival Ballet just a few years ago with the deft and encouraging *Prokofiev* in *Baroque*, and as the latest offering of Minto's individual command the same territory — the period in the film when dance halls were off the map with their associations of old Glen Miller hits and so on — it was hoped the AB would come up with something like the same amount of *Prokofiev*.

In the event, it didn't come about and there are few reasons why. For a start it seemed that yet again a triple bill would have been shrugged off without much financial trouble being involved, and, whatever money, has not enough, application and concentration from the dancers themselves.

Not more than five there were serious problems with the work as such. As Minto admitted himself in an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, there are just too many demands and projects to be got out of the limited choreographic vocabulary of the Festival money, stage and so on. On the evidence of the ballet as performance it was apparent that Minto had managed to create anything much out of them; had been trapped by the material so to speak.

So, as if to make up for lack of interest here, he had planned for a lot of dance within the general nostalgia. What he in fact came up with was only the well worn theme of a young man out on the urban pool for a lady, going to the old "Trio" dance hall, going through the motions of chasing up a girl, losing her and going home alone and disappointed, just as he had so many times some time before. That was it. An attempt was made to anticipate this myth throughout the program of dancing, but it never came about. The emotional level of the work, as well as the dynamic level of the music itself was lost like

monochromism. It was dry, listless and tired, and for a work involving disengagement the timing, much of which was it was just too much of a downer to lay along in the memory.

Difficulties were compounded by the dancers themselves. The old time dances looked uncomfortable on them, as if they had never danced them before and had to learn them from scratch at the rehearsal.

One would like to be complimentary about *Prokofiev* but it would be dishonest to give praise for something that was so thin, depressing and/or revealed by error of opinion.

Even David March in the central role, who our manager to begin his period lay into some of the most attractive material, was not pleased here, looking all at sea and not enjoying himself for a moment. I expect that it was meant to be slightly odd and we are meant to feel sorry for him when he comes home empty handed as it were, but it was a little too much to expect the audience to observe generously when the pall of gloom settled immediately over the entire ballet.

What was interesting to note in this first programme is that the Australian Ballet has finally realised what an asset they have lost in David March. There are other people in the Company who can dance better, or are at least more technically proficient, but there are few who can invest their parts with such meaning from one step to the next.

David March about spent the balance of Gershwin's *Othello* cursing, as he did, the audience's attention on his character of Iago. Admittedly villains are the most interesting characters in drama and no less in dance, but the focus here is meant to be on *Othello*. Fortunately on opening night Gary Norman realised what was happening and allowed himself to lean and look into his character rather than merely cursing him.

Norman's *Othello* was not so much the proud general whose vanity gets in the way of seeing the passage of events but rather a loving, thinking soul who too late lets himself be

hoodwinked into believing stories about his wife's fidelity, and subsequently just lets things follow their tragic course. His dancing was far more placed at the command of his character than it normally is and the contrast between him and the amazon, representing Iago of David March were striking.

I will always have reservations about the choreography of Gershwin's *Othello* though and more so in this *Othello* than in many of his other works. What we get here is a rather rudimentary Graham technique, laid on with a tinsel over a very bold and dramatic concept of Shakespeare's play. I thought if anything, that *Othello* should be expanded into a two act work so that a few more uses of culture can be achieved. To open through the plot of Shakespeare's *Othello* and have Desdemona strangled after twenty minutes really is testing the audience's goodwill.

Personally, I find the whole idea of *Othello* treated with his greater intelligence, originality and reverence as Iago himself. The Moor's Person, whereas the web of events and situations is created within the realistic confines of a story, clearly manages with all the paraphernalia of the drama slowly and threateningly parts out a picture. Which is *Othello* succeeded merely because of the excellent work by Jerry Goldsmith and the total dedication of the leading dancers.

It goes then about the long vacillations of Ashton's *Les Brevetés* as realised by Kieren Cox. Apart from the fact that it is hardly one of Ashton's most inspired creations, *Les Brevetés* comes up against that old whore about the AB and "English" dancing. This country simply cannot handle it, the style of the Royal Ballet is different from that of the AB, even though their sucking and mouling methods are the same. The AB now has its own style: a light elastic, domestic style and the light airy grace needed by Ashton in his work is something practically beyond their ken.

Les Brevetés is nothing more than a divertimento, a set of dances for elegant people in a park somewhere, some time, if anything it is to be made of it, the dancing has to carry the day.

Much as I have always admired Kieren Cox as a good "point" dancer with something of that elusive sense of grace confidence and sheer alert that a work like *Les Brevetés* needs, he seemed unable to communicate this sense to the dancers; he was rehearsing. Ego, the work was wooden and limp and the audience's hearts sagged with every audible thud.

In some ways, the highlights that were placed



Arms of the Australian Ballet in *Prokofiev*

Photo: Bruno-Gera

writes the most provocative bit at last turn out to be the highlights, especially the *MachMolen* *Chorema* pas de deux as danced by Gary Norman and Marilyn Stone. Although the male part in this ballet is reduced to nothing more than that of a prop, Norman gave an excellent display of soft and confident control as he supported Stone in all the turns, bends and disengagements that go to make up the most loped piece of choreography Stone herself is as capable as even, knowing that she is one of Australia's foremost dancers. Her sense of relaxation and joy in dancing is a pity considering to an audience harassed by some of the performances of this week, and she was no less experienced and finely tuned in this work than she has been at practically everything else she has performed.

It was very considerate of guest producer Ivan Kopylov to have his fledgling ballerina, Larissa Maas portrayed by Robin Cox for two scenes of the *MachMolen* pas de deux. Miss Maas, at the moment, is not only poorly equipped for the full choreographic rigours of the part but rather unsure of herself alone on stage. She had the most unswerving smile through great trouble throughout her performance, and the shoulder tension towards the end was only twenty percent of what they should be. Apart from this, though, she has a good, decent line most of the time, and the fish dives at the end were very well finished thanks again — and Miss Maas looked identical — to Kylinia Cox.

All in all the one highlight that I was thankful to see was Rosamund's *Flower Festival* at Glenageary. It was a special joy to see it so well danced by Ann Jensen. Dale Baker didn't bother to read in his rather sloppy and bombastic style for this one and that was unfortunate because he had a pretty good idea of the compass, lightness and pure line that Rosamund's choreography demands. And Jensen knew it all through, she knows the difference in carriage, placement and port de bras that make up a Rosamundian signature piece like this. She finished everything with a smart full stop and carried off the difficult final one levelled without drawing attention to them, and most of all she had a sense of peace and fun.

(Review by) *as in is is*



Christian White, David Birch & Gary Norman in *Golfello*. Photo: Barbara Ginn

Tchaikovsky Ballet Company

A dull but honest quality

"The Tchaikovsky Ballet Company Russia's award winning ballet company," the ads proclaim, "the nation's company of seventy five with complete orchestras and wings, following triumphant tours from Paris to Vienna, with several guest stars from the Bolshoi Ballet and the Leningrad Kirov Ballet are special programmes featuring the most popular of all Ballets, Giselle, and repeats and brilliantly performed *Gala Diversions*."

Well, it wasn't quite like that in Perth's huge Entertainment Centre on the opening night of the Company's first Australian tour. The five diversions, making up the first of the programme began with *The Dying Swan*, ended with the incredible *Grand Pas from Don Quixote* and offered the broken glimpse, at a Clopas White, of the two most interesting guest stars, Eric Ericson and Alison Dalman from the Kirov. Among highlights, there was one light piece, which if correct performances with the occasional muffed finish is to be the sex and a half thousand people present knew that even the Russians get a wrong sometimes, all this didn't add up to Gals anything. The love of theatre for which Bolshoi dancers are noted was quite missing in the dreary *Lepka-Kardashova* "Glad, Pas de Deux". In fact the individual curtain calls had more theatrical interest and energy about them than most of the *Diversions* dancing.

As to the "complete orchestras" — as interval I counted around twenty musicians, they sounded nice and a half strong, and played very badly indeed. The programme notes identified the conductor as Ilya Izyurov but boldly ignored the question of who the musicians were. I think I recognised some members of the W.A. Arts Orchestra.

Things got much better in the second half with Giselle and a fine sampling of "the nation's company of seventy five". The Kirov's Irina Kolyptseva danced the title role. Kolyptseva, now in her mid 40s commands great respect for the substance and strength of her technique. Like the production as a whole however, her potential lacked emotional impact, notably in the first act, where she wasn't helped by a pair of winged which gave her a rather looking more like her daughter.

It was the whole act that all the special family group groups had some lot of energy, and a slight of commitment were right around the massive instrument at the sight of those Russian length notes batted in heavy blue arcs. The programme notes tell us that the Tchaikovsky State Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Perm became the home of the Leningrad Kirov dancers and people during the second world war. When the Kirov were back to Leningrad, Perm was left with the beginnings of a school and company faithful to Kirov principles and techniques. The school must be a good one, because the White and Alison Karamenkova's Marie showed as a technical strength and clean finish nearly seen in classical corps work in Australia. For commitment of technique, the whole act by itself would probably justify the price of admission.

The fairly adequate orchestra may have been largely responsible for the muted impact of the second act, but the production in general had a dull but honest quality which made one wonder why the company should have become as the programme put it "one of the most sought after". (Continued on page 52)



Irina Kolyptseva in *Giselle*

Odd Angry Shot — ignores the awkward fact



John Jarrett, Graham Kennedy, John Hargreaves, Bryan Brown and Christine Randall in *The Odd Angry Shot*

The Odd Angry Shot like *The Deer Hunter*, is about combat that happens to take place in Vietnam about soldiers living means with one another and killing other soldiers, looting, fraternising at the mess table, worrying about their women back home, worrying about their men and their sexual future and feeling somewhat faded when they return to the old home town.

Apart from the fact that a lot more happens in *The Deer Hunter* — and why not, the budget was bigger — there is a considerable difference in the tone of the dialogue.

The Australians are smart-ars. They never ask a straight question or get a straight answer. The guys fly with the frequency, and are very much of the same quality most all that back of a Graham Kennedy television show.

Kennedy is the not very secret weapon of *The Odd Angry Shot*. He has the role of Harry, the somewhat foot-bellied older man in the army because his wife left him and not even for another chap just because she didn't like him much. He is a wee bit mean about male of the males.

The story begins with the birthday party of Bill a young man just off to the war. He has to cut the cake and make a wish. It is clear that what he wishes is that his girl friend will let him make love to her before he sails out into the army. Everybody sings French, and that done with he leaves the party and persuades her to a brief roll on the lawn. Next stop, Vietnam, via a Quoniam plane. What a way to go to war, say the kids, breaking upon the line of several nation cases of beer.

From then on it is cards in the hole, one every day, certain into the night after the Chinese, a usually every ten minutes or so, and random jokes, most of them predictable, a lot of them funny, the kind of thing that would make you laugh if you ever landed in a bar.

The soldiers don't know why they are fighting and they don't care. But they fear that when they get home the politicians, the sugar and poison "daisy" will leave them in some way.

This is the line that was to be shown to the Prince of Wales on his recent visit and was nobly cancelled by a city father. It may have been the instantaneous flow of dirty words,

though I don't for a moment doubt that as the way soldiers talk when commencing with each other, the quick, their vehicles, their men and their guns. Or it may have been the full frontal under the camp shower. Incidentally it is amusing how the movie reminded up everyone of those park and shower the next afternoon just out of the showers after a healthy days reconnaissance and scout. These glowing healthy faces helped to present the illusion that I was looking at a recruiting film in which the director had gone a bit far, so to speak exceeded his bond.

The music in the Don's party at the paddock fields are well portrayed by Graham Kennedy, John Hargreaves, Bryan Brown, John Jarrett and Christine Randall but the object of the camera was merely not just to show a group of fun-loving Aussies drinking, retelling the old bush yarns staging a boxing match between a spider and a scorpion and killing a few members of the Viet Cong. There was more in Australia's presence in Vietnam than that. The night and morning of a split the morning down the middle for some years, and it seems a waste of time to make a film about soldiers in Vietnam while ignoring that awkward fact.

FEMFLICKS — some deserve a commercial airing.

Some of the films in the FEMFLICKS programme at the Sydney Film Festival certainly deserve a commercial airing, or at least to be seen on television not too late at night. Amongst them is *Jelley: A Whole of a Day*. Working with Child Care (which I thought would be about day nursery teachers but turned out to be about working parents), and a little piece called *Alibi*. *Flintley* starred fun with Leda Jeff's over-the-top acting.

There is only two minutes long, a simple soap-like highly filmed encounter between a dancing girl and her partner made by *Antidote* filmmakers. *A Whole of a Day* is also short, five minutes of exhilarating filming on a beach directed by Sam Wilson in colour, which seems like a missing piece for the whole. Mr Wilson starts with children on a school outing and sculpting wharves and finishes with live footage of their daughters.

Jelley and *Working With Child Care* especially fit into mature and largely mature, are both by Carolyn Barnett who must be regarded as having a significant future as a director (I said by and incidentally, that there is nothing "severely formal", far from it, better phrase, about these two films. Their collection simply shows that women make films and some women make good films).

Jelley is a fictional film, based and witty about a schoolgirl carrying out her fantasy of being one of the "beautiful people" (the change of role is not intended but, to manage beauty in light gown and heavy make up, is surprisingly turned out at the powder room at an airport — from homework to the place, as it were, in five busy minutes like naturally meets a young man with variable hairdressing) who buys her a drink

in two. The only adverse criticism one could make here is that the well-photographed boy youth has a bit too much in the past.

Working With Child Care was made for the Women's Trade Union Commission and is a very forthright documentary, though rather plainly put. It is about parents who have to fit their two long lines into social patterns which make no allowances. A Turkish woman says, "The boss don't understand because his wife don't work." An Indonesian migrant father, on the other hand, allowed to be laid off work because of a short time lapse between the opening of the nursery and the closing at time of the day. I have never seen a better example of the largely ignored fact that the child carers are as important to industry as the carer.

Another successful documentary is *State Of Mind* in which Elizabeth O'Neill goes behind the scenes of the Women's Weekly's successful cooking corner and manages to find the whole deal up in a good historical way, reminding me of a piece I once read about the success of a "prison house" by a team of Women's Weekly staff who wanted lost pages of poems, and a volume of text.

In the fictional film *Calvin Luby: A Never Saw Him Again* is a well-scripted story of a lively chic woman — child from the wrong side of the tracks — turned off by a friendly class-conscious mother. *Australia* who like to think they are members of a classless society may be quite surprised at this, though possibly able to quote its implications on the grounds that O'Neill has let his story go to the states.

Dave Gomboff's *The Clown and the Mind Reader* is probably the most interesting film, with a cast of three original actors from New



Also *Hoolley*: *Home and Beyond* (starring in *Calvin Luby* is *A Never Saw Him Again*).

Southwest and a script "collaborated from" a short story by David Wright. It was produced with the assistance of the Creative Development branch of the Australian Film Commission, in colour and more for money two minutes. The scores are Corbinne Turner, Timothy Bess and Ross Luby at work, man and female intruder, or other women.

The film sets out to explore a marriage in which the husband is a clown and the wife a mind reader, while the mother is a pretty girl on a beach holiday who is attracted to the man while occupying herself with a boy friend of her own age. The story finishes back to an accident that turned the wife into an invalid and the husband into a bored, frustrated breadwinner. The question is, how well does the wife read her husband's mind?

The film has its moments but is confusingly constructed, slow and could have the repetitive adjective "very" applied to it with some justification.

Opera Continued from page 11.

important than her darkness.

Visibly it was a nice night but not exactly a memorable one. Yvonne Kenny was a very good Leda. Nad Mannan on conducting. Nicholas Roth Lowe, when showing considerable talent in the role of Natch, left me less dramatically moved than Yusuf Kaymakci had in *Redburn*. Robert Schumann, in *Zug*, held up his corner of the action in all departments with a workmanlike but unmemorable manner.

The Australian Opera's well broken in *Le Bohème* — I did not notice all looking through the picture film at the company's Sydney head quarters how many Maria, Rosalinde and Lina Bohèmes had been travelled through the production since 1970 — was as good as far as when I saw its successor at the Melbourne Festival March 17, less than a week after its first performance of the current season.

Apparently the premiere had been pretty bad,

with even such an experienced conductor as Carlo Feller. Others unable to maintain standards and long out effectively the major points of the score, and things had deteriorated even further during the week between the premiere and the performance I attended.

But by then St Patrick's Day means the company was playing quite well if not quite so well as it had played for *Bohème* on *Tessie* the previous night. Lindetta Farley was fairly well recovered from the throat ailment which had badly affected her opening performance, and John Carlin was a touchingly effective Mimì.

The relationship between the original lovers was touchingly portrayed and well sung, even though traces of Parker's affliction still occasionally manifested themselves through fits of stress at the top of his range. Carlin though was a top form — singing magnificently all afternoon and conveying a wealth of characterisation.

Drama Continued from page 10.

at St Roman Hall company. Certainly they did produce *Little Punks* when we saw and marvelled at during the 1975 Season too. But greater justice would be done to the company by evaluating it as a provincial company whole, because of its basic link with the Koori club, a reasonable portfolio of things done in a light and better way both locally and

Cynicism has no place in Western Australia's official 150th anniversary celebration. But I wondered more at the publicity of local academics coming to see, just because it's Ruman, a company they'd never heard of. I shouldn't worry, I suppose — when the anniversary, in eventual terms, gets on the details of the first half programme and cost, beginning with *Calvin Luby* in "The Living Room" the lady behind me used to her friend "We glad they're doing this. They're out of the South Lake from here last year."

Australia, Beckett, Bergman and Marowitz

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The Performing Arts Yearbook of Australia 1977 (Sydney: Publications Pty 1978)

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no more searching in the long run than Farm and Big Mac.

Perhaps to counter this one can turn to the short prose of Samuel Beckett. *Six Scenes* brings together six of his most exciting short prose pieces — all "scenarios of longer works which were either abandoned or condemned." They all have a very specific "mood": an old man walks out of the house on yet another day and encounters a white horse crossing his path in the distance, a still life of figures ends in an interminable dialogue as a white box, with four flickers and flashes of meaning about two hundred people slowly and slowly around it in a vast cylinder according to a set of precise rules commonly agreed upon. The piece also was a great deal of what is usually thought of as really really mystery — of path, run, the body — but with an anatomy and formal precision which is astonishing. These prose pieces have the same perfect formal reflection of Beckett's avowedly search for clarity "meaning" which readers will know from his later stage, film and television pieces.

And as if to prove that he is a serious and wide-ranging artist in these media as well, we have the last phenomenon of the *Journal of Beckett Studies* number 1 of which was mentioned in this column a few months ago. *Issue number 1* demonstrates that what would appear a perfect opportunity for academic self-indulgence is in fact, with some exceptions, a fascinating account for the general reader of the continuing work of one of the giants of serious enlightenment in the 20th century. This issue contains an unpublished short piece by Beckett, an interview with Bill Whitehead about working with Beckett on stage, radio and television, and various reviews of productions, as well as the academic and bibliographical trappings.

Roundup a *A Film Study* by Ingemar Bergman which contains the script of *Through A Glass Darkly*, *The Cries of the Silence*. They read extraordinarily well, being laid out almost as novels, the dialogue is interwoven with quite lyrical descriptions. They are classic Bergman, metaphysical explorations — like Beckett's poems. There is a remarkable image at the end of *Through A Glass Darkly* which almost exactly recalls the whole writing of Beckett's *Imagination Dead Imagine* from *Six Scenes*: "It seems as if they were standing in the midst of the sea a whistling, with the whistling of the summer day above their heads, as if they were that as though a globe of white glass infinitely trying in the silent misty whistling."

The *Marowitz Shakespeare* brings us down with a crunch. This is a collection of his collages and variations of Shakespeare. His introduction

attempts to justify the treatment (although, as he says, such work needs more) in terms of constant radical change, at the very assumption of a self, being the only thing which makes an "experience" as the theatre possible — which is surely an extraordinary claim. In spite of his talk of the "message" in each of his collages, he seems preoccupied with change of form for its own sake — or rather for the sake of shaking up his audience, whom he regards contemptuously as "like the emphatic turn of the stopped clock that will resist all efforts to be wound to the correct time out of an obsessive desire to maintain the integrity of its broken mechanism." So go and see Marowitz, you poor dumb shee.

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The idea of a *Performing Arts Year Book of Australia* is undoubtedly a good one (after all, they do that sort of thing in England) but with the 1977 scheme it is difficult to see what use it will be to whom. It is basically a list of concerts, ballets, operas and theatrical productions, vaguely linked together by introductory blurbs and decked out with innumerable inadequately captioned photographs. It is nice to follow the work of specific companies, and there is an index of plays for the theatre system, but any other information, such as the work of a particular artist for the year, has to be searched for laboriously throughout the volume. The introductory sections are of inconsistent standard: some are quite good and many are unhelpful in spite of being rather absorbing. The theatre companies are identified only by name (even *art*) and some have introductory blurbs and some not, with no apparent principle in the selection. It is good to have the information gathered together in one volume, but less glossy presentation and more care taken for more money would really improve it.

The remaining books for this month are concerned with higher matters. A case in the national press recently complained that Australian theatre interest only for the late bar pie and Big Mac hamburgers — the cult was based around the question "Whatever happened to good old Entertainment?" It is very well to be

A U S T R A L I A

A.C.T.

CAMERA THEATRE (02 7608)
The Gypsy Carle Opera Company
Admission by W & G O'Brien and As the Gallows
14 to 19 May

CHILDREN STREET WALL (07 8781)
The Japan Company
Wind in the Willows adapted by the company
1 to 18 May Monday to Friday

PLAYHOUSE (07 7608)
Marionette Theatre of Australia
The Mysterious Possum
A puppet play for children
5, 7, 9 May

THEATRE (07 4322)
Canberra Repertory
Mandrill Wolf at Elgar's attempt and directed by
Rosemary Hyde 2-3 May
Tempo Theatre
Oh, What a Lovely War by the Allen Institutional
Workshop 1-3 May to 2 June Wednesdays in
Selection

For further contact Margaret Webb on
49 4162

NEW SOUTH WALES

ACTORS COMPANY (061 7103)
Oleball by Shakespeare, directed by David
Goodhead with Maurice Roemer, Les Peen
James Macdonald and Kathryn Thompson
Until 5 May with possible extensions

ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES
(02 744111)
Julia Adelaide Lasso Argentinian dances
Touring throughout the State and at
Bioshikon Theatre, Penrith, 14, 12 & 13 May

LES COURTES PRESENTATIONS (02 9676)
John Jackson introduced bush music: Touring
schools, primary and secondary schools in Sydney
Metropolitan area

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (02 4977)
Rain by Suzanne Manheim, directed by Jon
Evans with Helen Moran, Brian Young, Judy
Peters and Michael Kaye: Throughout May

FRANK STRAINS BULL IN RUSH
THEATRE RESTAURANT (027 4627)

Thanks for the Memory a musical review from
the last of the century to today with Noel
Brophy, Barbara Wyndon, Garth Mander, Neil
Bryant and Helen Lawson directed by George
Cadden Throughout May

FREEDWHEELS THE COMPANY (061 1142)
The Right Thing To Do by Peter Malleson,
Director, Brent McGowan, with Rosalind Hall,
Susan Reinhardt, Janis Wheatley: Playing in
High Schools in Newcastle and the Hunter
Region

Quint by Peter Malleson and the Company
Primary Schools: Vaccines youth theatre
workshop 7-12 May

GENIENATHEATRE (027 9078)
Foster disintegrated by Shakespeare, directed by
Margaret Rensick with Peter Ryan, Donna
Alba, Peter Hickey, Guymer Mitchell and Pat
East: Commences 3 May: Performances Friday,
Saturday and Sunday

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (02 3401)
Secret Cove with Ray Livingston, directed by
Peter Barry: Until 13 May

Jesus the Musical, directed by George Martin
with Raye Gordon, Bill Perryman, Nancy
Horne, the Nations, Anne Craig and Kasia
Johns: From 29 May

KIPPOURIE PUB THEATRE (02 4415)
Kenneth Hall: Molehill Point
The Vampire Show: written and directed by
Peggy Quinlan with Patrick Ward and Laura
Gathered: Saturdays throughout May

MARIAN STREET THEATRE (02 3160)
The Flower Table by Alan Ayckbourn, directed
by Alanine Duncan with Judy Meale, Philip
Hansen and Tom McCarthy: Until 12 May
Flare, the musical directed by Alanine
Duncan: From 16 May

WISLE HILL THEATRE RESTAURANT
(02 8332)

Love by the Dove written and directed by Stanley
Wish with Ron Hadfield, Alan Adams and
Kasia Johns: Throughout May

MUSE LOFT THEATRE (07 6559)
On Paper written by Henry Seligson et al,
directed by William Orr with Lee Young and
Ann Emery: Throughout May

NFW THEATRE (02 3403)
Rashida Cook Lee by Nelson, directed by John
Armstrong with Brian Adams-Smith, James
Nery, Jon Williams, Paul Quinn and Betty
Haines: Throughout May on Friday, Saturday &
Sunday

HUMBOLD THEATRE (02 580)
The Ser by Edward Bond, directed by
Richard Wharton, with John Bell, Ruth
Cruswell, Debbie Bate, Maggie Dixon, John
Hawthorn, Andrew James and Robert van
Mackendorp: Commences 8 May
Downstairs: American Signale by David
Munier, directed by Peter Bentley with Graham
Rome, Stanley Wish and Brandon Bate:
From 16 May

ORANGE CIVIC THEATRE (02 62 1514)
The Figure Company
Wind in the Willows adapted by the company
14-23 May

PLAYERS THEATRE COMPANY (02 7211)
Jungle Fennies Theatre

Sooty Web by Agatha Christie, directed by
Graham Corry with Tony Greenhill, Les
Fraser, Joe James, Kenneth Lund and Kay
Taylor: Expected to run throughout May

109 PLAYHOUSE (02 6044)
An Evening with Margaret Audleyford with
Tracy Lee, directed by John Howell: Fridays
Saturdays and Sundays throughout May
Strong, strong singer: children's musical by
Raele Worm with 200 Players directed by John
Howell: Saturdays throughout May

Q THEATRE (02 31 2715)
The Good Soldier Schweik by Jaroslav Hasek,
As Perish until 6 May, Parasomnia 6-13 May
and Rankdown 16-19 May
The Father by Strindberg: commences 16 May,
Perish

REPERT THEATRE (01 9907)
Down, As the Inside: superstars: Until 19
May

Dolly Carle Company on *It's a Pity* by
Gilbert & Sullivan: From 21-26 May and *The
Mikado* by G & S: from 29 May

RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY
(061 25 2625)
Old Campus Theatre, Wagga
Dance: Fish, Star and Pils to Pans: From 1-1
21 May

ROCKEPLAYERS (02 670128 7638)
12-13 Bridge Road, Gile
Pleasant Features: *The Bridgely Party*, *The Home-coming* and *Old Times*: directed by Barry
Hayes, Italy: Sunday and Bill Popay:
Until 3 May with possible extensions

SYDNEY CENTRE (02 8155)
York Theatre: *Romeo and Juliet* in Shakespeare:
National production directed by John Bell with
Neil Arnold, Angela Pardo, Drew Forsythe and
Kerry Walker: Until 13 May
A Manual of French Warfare by Ciri-Gottman:
State Theatre Company of SA, production
directed by Colin Gordon, with Colin Frobish,
Selma Kodjames, Patrick Irwin, Wayne Jarman
and Neil Forsythe: From 11 May

Evocative Theatre: *Noir*: New music: from 7
to 12 May
Disorders, *Genes*: by Trevor Griffiths:
Sydney University Dramatic Society production
directed by Neil Arnold: Until 3 May
Production directed by City Road Youth
Theatre: director Mark Nelson: From 7-12
May

SPRINKLE THEATRE RESTAURANT
(061 7442)
Four on the Floor written by Ron Blackhead
and Michael Boddy: Directed by Michael Boddy,
with Anne Sumner, Gordon Poole and Ron
Blackhead: Throughout May

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE COSH
Opera Theatre: The Arabian Nights in
Cappella choreographed by Peggy van Praagh:
Until 7 May, Les Septieme choreographed by
Fokien, Les Armes: choreographed by
Kazuo Mitsuoka and The Concert: cho-
reographed by Jerome Robbins: from 10-30 May
Drama Theatre: *Philippe Girey*: (series of
animation) until 19 May

Q Theatre production for the Sydney Theatre
Company of *The Devil's Daughters* by Shaw
directed by Dennis Warburton: From 21 May
THEATRE ROYAL (02 6811)
Shakespeare by Ian Lively: directed by Michael
Stearns, with Dennis Owen and Robin
Nixon: Until 19 May
Once a Cuckoo by Mary O'Malley: A
McIntyre Theatre Company production: From
22 May
For further contact: Gerald Long on 372 1289

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NORTHERN TERRITORY

ARLON'S MAINT

Art Zanes by Harold Foster Director, Robert Rumber 26 Apr-13 May

For entries contact *Arrows* Mnt 889 47 532

QUEENSLAND

ARTS THEATRE (06 3344)

Art For Mary by Kay Ransome and Harold Bosker Director, Margaret Brown 3 May-8 Jun

BRISBANE ACTORS' COMPANY (02 7848) Members by William Shakespeare at Twelfth Night Theatre Director, Jane Adams, with David Clemenston, Jerrisa Flawer, Michael McCaffrey, Kay Stephenson 3 May-5 May

CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Peter Pan devised and directed by Jason Strang 7-18 May

Suppawade by Jay McKin and Jan Rans. Director, Jay McKin 6 Apr-26 May

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (02 3377)

Mad as the Mountains Queensland Light Opera Company 3 May-5 May

The Kingfisher by William Douglas Home Director, Lorna O'Neil, with Georgia Whitton, John McCallum and Frank Thomas 7-15 May
Farin al Laccamoor by Domenico Guerciolini Opera Company Director, John Milson, Design James Redwood, Conductor, Christine Young 6 Queensland Theatre Orchestra 30 May

LA BOUTE (06 4022)

Plains by Louis Nemes Director, John Milson, Design, Luigi Fortini 15 May-19 May

1 EXCHANGE PRESENTATIONS (02 4144)

Avails Come at Town House and directed by Clarry R. Gorman At the Radio, West End Musical director, Carolyn Thompson, with Kim Goldworthy and Kevin Mander 30 Apr-19 May

QUEENSLAND ARTS COUNCIL (02 3980)

After McCulloch and Caroline Doyle at Conservatorium Mappin's Theatre 26 May

Art-Career classical guitarist On tour

Art-Glory vibrant On tour

What Come A Flying by Douglas Hoag 6 Queensland Theatre Company Secondary schools tour

I Know the Type by Lloyd Nelson, What is some poetry and music programme, Queensland Theatre Company school tour

QUEENSLAND BALLET COMPANY

(02 3333)

35/36 Theatre

Le Plume Choreography August Bournonville, Design, James Redwood 4 Queens Choreography Don Arden 4 Dance Space 4 Choreography, Harold Collins 4 Queensland Pui de dans 4000 Spiritual Pui de dans from Swiss Lake 11-19 May
The Madrigal Choreography, James Redwood, Miss Hurler On tour 23 May-21 July

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY

(02 3177)

Avails Come by Harold Foster Director, Alan Edwards, Design, Peter Cook starring Pat Bishop 13 May

THE TWELFTH NIGHT COMPANY

(02 7843/52 588)

Allego End by Harold Foster and Kurt Wolf Dettler, John Milson, Design, Miss Douglas 14 May-8 Jun

For entries contact Don Rumber on 288-3618

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE

The Space

Flaky Children 17-19 May

Cont Out Festival at the Balcony Theatre, Queen Adelaide 7-11 May

Q THEATRE

Gipsy by Anna and Collette Lee 7-12 May

Archie by John by Noel Coward 26-30 May 21 Jun

SHERIDAN THEATRE (08 3751)

Twins by Christopher Hampton Adelaide Theatre Group directed by Brian Debono Wed 24-26 May

STATE THEATRE COMPANY (01 5150)

The Playhouse

Shogun by Don Boustanale Director, Colin Gerner 28 Apr-19 May

STATE OPERA

The Opera Theatre

The Secret Marriage by Clemens 3-12 May

Cont Out Festival Adelaide on Opera by Benjamin Britten 3, 8, 10 May

TRUPE

Red Shed Theatre

City 48 The House 10 a programme of two plays

Cont Out Festival Adelaide on Opera by Benjamin Britten 3, 8, 10 May

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE THEATRE

GUILD

Latin Theatre

Cont Out Festival Adelaide on Opera by Benjamin Britten 3, 8, 10 May

Cont Out Festival Adelaide on Opera by Benjamin Britten 3, 8, 10 May

For entries contact *Adelaide Ref* on 242 8102

TASMANIA

POLYCON THEATRE (03 4974)

Tom Jones devised and directed by Don Gray At Bullfinch Restaurant Battery Point Musical director, Bruce Corbitt 4, 5, 6, 19 May

TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE (03 1511)

Kullb a dub dub at the Westhouse Theatre Director, Peter Wilson 21-23 May

Kullb written and directed by Peter Wilson At the Launceston Teachers Centre Music John Shaw 21-23 May

THEATRE ROYAL (04 6244)

Deliverance Review Old Nick Company 4-18 May

The Secret Marriage with the South Australian Opera Company 23 May-2 Jun

For entries contact the editorial office on 494 47 4630

VICTORIA

ACTORS THEATRE (03 4000)

Tom Jones At Now you know why 19-21 May

Cont Out Festival Adelaide on Opera by Benjamin Britten 3, 8, 10 May

ALEXANDER THEATRE (04 3030)

Gipsy and *Dolls* Clemenston Light Opera Company 4-18 May

ARONA THEATRE (04 946724-7273)

Scenopie by Edward Albee Company On Design and directed by Peter Talbot

Cont Out Festival Adelaide on Opera by Benjamin Britten 3, 8, 10 May

For entries contact *Adelaide Ref* on 242 8102

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Guide

Merbeth by William Shakespeare, Director John Swanton To 3 May
Aunt and the Aunts by George Bernard Shaw, Director Ray Lushat

NATIONAL THEATRE
Miss of La Mancha by Dale Wasserman, Festival Theatre Company 11-19 May

THE MILL PERFORMING GROUP
6551 21 1986
Drama Centre of Deakin University Regular Evening Productions

PALAIS THEATRE (24-6035)
The Card of the Golden Hair by Piccini and The Madrigals of Nuremberg by Wagner, an evening, The Australian Opera Company

PIGGIN PUPPET THEATRE (018-6030)
Pierrot Plon by J. M. Barrie, Adapted and directed by Graham Bell

POLYGLOT PUPPETS (013-1125)
Touring schools and community centres

PRINCIPAL THEATRE (040-2811)
The Triumph of Honour by Rossini Australian Opera Company

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (41-5811)
Elixir of Love at the Melbourne Arts Centre Theatre 24-5 May

There's a Jew Two Grams' diary notes adapted by Peter Narrowsby Touring metropolitan and country areas

For further contact see Carthage on 761 1777

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CIVIL THEATRE RESTAURANT (073-1959)
The First Part 79 Show Director Max Ray Cummings

RAYMAN THEATRE (098-7638)
The Crucible by Arthur Miller, Director, Tony Macdonald 15-9-12 May

THE HOLE IN THE WALL (081-2408)
City Sings by Stephen Pollackoff, Director, Colin Macdonald 11 Apr-19 May
Well Along by Robert Lord, Director, Colin Macdonald 24 May-23 Jun

NATIONAL THEATRE (023-3588)
All the Playhouse
Something's Afoot by James McDonald, David Vos and Robert Gerlach, Director Edgar Macdonald 1 May-2 Jun

Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov, Director, Stephen Barry 7 Jun-23 Jun

THE OCTAGON THEATRE (047-5515)
Intimate Company: Serenissima by Abdul Fagard From 8 May

THE REGAL (081-1537)
Bedroom Floor by Alan Ayckbourn, Director Peter Williams From 12 Jun

WA ARTS COUNCIL
Touring Programme WA Ballet Company on South West tour
Chief Minkie: Popover Primary and secondary schools

WA BALLET COMPANY (031-6134)
The Concert (Ballet) KAT based on a libretto by Elizabeth Blackmore Music, Victorian Williams choreography, Garth Wicks 29 Jun-7 Jul

WA OPERA COMPANY (028-4113)
The Beggar Opera by Benjamin Britten
Director: Alan Abbott Country tour

For further contact see address on 769-8079

Theatre Australia



Next Month

BRECHT ISSUE

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John Willett and Martin Esslin

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THEPIA'S PRIZE CROSSWORD No 11

Name

Address

Answer

- 22 Aggressive little animals live at number 14,5
- Three played by the chess pool 19
- "... is just, subtle and mighty —" (Thomas de Quincey) 19
- Offering with spirit, promise... 19
- Syll, whose huge... troubled the system 15,16
- King caught up in terrible argument 19
- Monks' day came based upon the word 15
- God rewards us if he's getting worried 16
- Across 1 trapped between the upper and the... 15,16
- Especially smart business graduates at the Darling... 19
- "... she crosses 1 in shape no larger than an... 19
- Intrepid spreading... and... 19
- Amorally made of wit 15

Down

- Pyth comes out for catches 19
- Form 1950 ruled 19
- 100 to 1 in a word? 19
- Pack a brown chape? 14-7
- What trouble and you'll get covered in patch 15
- Employing short maximisation of horse about head... 15
- Group and sometimes showed a jolly team, we... 19
- From some in Claret's make up 19
- Restoration of university... 19
- Gift in first and final from everywhere 19
- Thrift's matching in the... to indicate an... 15
- Swaps at South and... 19



The first correct entry drawn on May 25th will receive one year's free subscription to TPA

Last month's answers

Last month's answer was Mr P J Day, Perthshire NSW